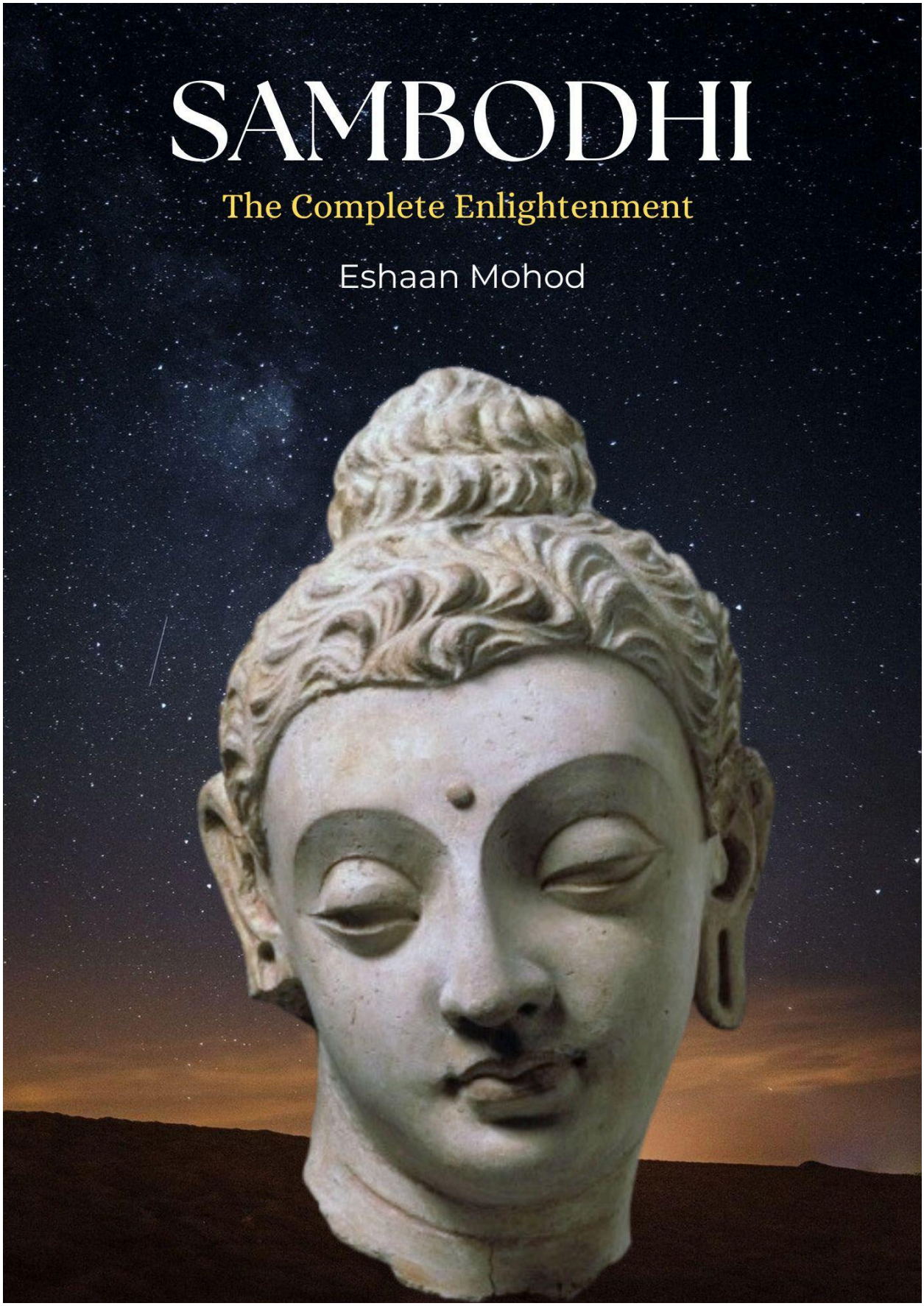
SAMBODHI

The Complete Enlightenment

Eshaan Mohod



Preface

Namo Buddhaya

The teachings of the Buddha, one of the Three Jewels of Buddhism, offer a profound and transformative guide for humanity. In this book, Sambodhi – The Complete Enlightenment, I have endeavored to provide a clear and accessible understanding of Buddhahood by exploring key figures and concepts central to Buddhist philosophy. My intention is not only to make the Buddha's teachings more comprehensible but also to demonstrate their timeless relevance across generations.

Within these pages, you will find detailed discussions on Sambodhi, the Trikāya doctrine, multiple world systems, cosmic Buddhas, pure lands, various manifestations, the Five Dhyāni Buddhas, female Buddhas, the Ādi Buddha, Samantabhadra, the Pacceka Buddhas, the 28 Sammāsambuddhas, the Medicine Buddha, Arahants, and the future Buddha, Metteya. I have also included Tantric Buddhas such as Herukas from the Cakrasamvara Tantra, Guhyasamāja Tantra, Hevajra Tantra, Yamāntaka Tantra, and Kālacakra Tantra. These revered figures not only shape the Buddhist worldview but also offer deep insights into the vast and enduring presence of the Buddha across

past, present, and future. The Medicine Buddha, with his healing compassion, reminds us of the transformative and restorative power of the Dharma.

To enhance understanding, this book includes numerous illustrations, thoughtfully selected from the internet, to complement the text. The rights to these images belong to their respective creators, to whom I am deeply grateful. These illustrations are used solely to enrich the reader's experience and are not intended for commercial purposes.

This work has been written with the sincere purpose of spreading the Dharma and making the Buddha’s wisdom accessible to all. I have no intention of selling this book. If any artist or rights holder has concerns regarding the usage of their illustrations, I am open to discussion and will gladly address any issues. Please feel free to contact me for any inquiries.

It is my hope that this humble offering will illuminate the path of the Buddha and inspire readers to explore and embrace the wisdom of the Dharma. May the teachings of the Buddha continue to guide us all toward complete enlightenment.

Namo Buddhaya

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Sambodhi

Meaning and Etymology :
The word Sambodhi (Sanskrit: सम्बोधि, Pali: सम्बोधि) is a Buddhist term with deep meaning.

Sam- (सम) → "Complete," "perfect," or "fully."
Bodhi (बोधि) → "Awakening," "enlightenment," or "knowledge of the true reality.”

So, Sambodhi means "Perfect Enlightenment", "Complete Awakening” or “Complete Enlightenment”.

Definition and Essence :
Sambodhi refers to the full and unsurpassed awakening attained by a Buddha.

It is the ultimate realization of ultimate truth, Nirvāṇa, beyond ignorance and suffering.

In Buddhist texts, sambodhi often points specifically to the Supreme Awakening of the Buddha, distinguishing it from partial awakenings or insights gained by disciples (śrāvakas) and solitary realizers (pratyekabuddhas).

It implies direct realization of the Four Noble Truths, dependent origination (pratītyasamutpāda), and the non-dual nature of reality.

Sambodhi as Dharmakāya :
In the highest understanding, Sambodhi is the Dharmakāya, the body of ultimate reality.
Dharmakāya is beyond form, beyond words, and beyond conceptual thought.
Since this ultimate truth is difficult to describe, it manifests in different ways to guide beings.

Three Manifestations of Sambodhi (Trikāya) :
The awakened Sambodhi expresses itself in three bodies (Trikāya):
Dharmakaya (धर्मकाया) – The Ultimate Reality
The ultimate truth itself, the limitless reality beyond duality.

Sambhogakaya (सम्भोगकाया) – The Bliss/Enjoyment Body
The body of enjoyment, appearing to advanced bodhisattvas in pure realms, often in radiant and majestic forms.

Nirmanakaya (निर्माणकाया) – The Emanation Body

The body of emanation, appearing in the world in countless ways, such as historical Buddhas, teachers, or even ordinary beings, to help guide others.

Symbolic Manifestations of Sambodhi :
Because the ultimate Sambodhi cannot be directly expressed in words, it reveals itself through symbolic forms:
Peaceful forms – Gentle, serene Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who radiate calm and compassion.

Semi-wrathful forms – Fierce yet compassionate deities who balance peace with power.

Wrathful forms – Very ferocious appearances that destroy ignorance, ego, and obstacles on the path to enlightenment.

These forms may look different, but they all arise from the same enlightened truth.

Universality of Sambodhi :
There are countless beings who have attained Sambodhi, and they manifest in innumerable ways to help sentient beings.

Some appear as peaceful Buddhas, some as semi-wrathful, and some as wrathful protectors. Regardless of their form, they are all expressions of the same ultimate reality, the Dharmakāya.

In the end, Sambodhi is not limited to any single image, name, or form.
It is the complete awakening beyond duality, manifesting endlessly out of compassion for beings.
Whether we encounter it in a serene image of the Buddha, a radiant Bodhisattva, or a terrifying protector deity, all are manifestations of the one truth of Sambodhi.

Sambodhi in the Lotus Sūtra: The Dragon King's Daughter :
A famous example of Sambodhi manifesting in surprising ways is found in the Lotus Sūtra (Chapter 12: Devadatta).

In Chapter 12 (“Devadatta”) of the Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra (Lotus Sūtra), Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva praises the wisdom of the Nāga King Sāgara’s daughter, noting that she is only eight years old yet has “instantly produced the thought of enlightenment (bodhicitta) and attained the stage of nonretrogression”.

Later Śāriputra (Shariputra) doubts that a woman could become a Buddha so quickly, but the girl proves him wrong.

After she offers a priceless jewel to the Buddha, the assembly witnesses her miraculous transformation and enlightenment:
“There is the daughter of the nāga king Sāgara who is only eight years old… She instantly produced the thought of enlightenment (bodhicittaṃ) and attained the stage of nonretrogression”.
“Then the assembly saw the daughter of the nāga king instantly transform into a man, perfect the bodhisattva practices, go to the vimalā world in the south, sit on a jeweled lotus flower, and attain highest, complete enlightenment, become endowed with the thirty-two marks and eighty excellent characteristics, and expound the True Dharma…”.

In short, the Dragon King’s eight-year-old daughter immediately becomes a Buddha.
(Her change into a male bodhisattva before final enlightenment is a symbolic detail.)

This episode occurs in a larger assembly where Shakyamuni Buddha teaches the Lotus Sūtra.

Notably, Śāriputra objects that “a woman’s body is soiled” and cites five old “obstacles” (e.g. a female could never become a Buddha).
The dragon girl’s instant enlightenment shows those obstacles nullified.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism this scene is read as evidence of universal Buddha-nature: any being – human or non-human, male or female, child or adult – can attain Buddhahood.

It “promotes the idea that women can also become Buddhas just like monks” and “affirms the equality of everyone”.

Her subsequent transformation and awakening make clear that neither youth, gender, nor species prevents Buddhahood.
In other words, the sutra makes a radical statement: anyone with faith in the Dharma can quickly become a Buddha.

This story is very important in Mahāyāna thought because:
It breaks the barrier that women cannot become Buddhas.
It shows that enlightenment is not limited by gender, age, form, or even species (since she was a nāga, not human).

It emphasizes the universality of Buddhahood, that all beings have Buddha-nature and can realize it.

Cosmic Buddhas and World-Systems in Early Buddhism :

Many people argue that the concepts of cosmic Buddhas, multiple world-systems, and Pure Lands are later additions found only in Mahāyāna texts and were never taught by the historical Buddha. However, this is a misunderstanding.

The Pāli Canon (Tipiṭaka), which preserves the earliest recorded teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha, contains multiple references to other Buddhas, past and future Buddhas, and cosmic realms influenced by Buddhas.

These texts show that the Buddha himself spoke of universes beyond this world and of realms purified by the presence and merit of a Buddha.

Past Buddhas in the Pāli Canon :

The **Mahāpadāna Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 14)** provides one of the clearest statements about past Buddhas. In this sutta, the Buddha narrates the lives of six Buddhas who preceded him: Vipassī, Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha,

Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa. Each of these Buddhas arose in different world-systems and aeons, lived long lives, and attained perfect enlightenment, thereby demonstrating that Buddhas are not unique to our world or time.

Similarly, the **Buddhavaṁsa (Khuddaka Nikāya)** lists twenty-four Buddhas prior to Gotama Buddha, beginning with Dīpaṅkara Buddha, who prophesied Gotama's future Buddhahood.

The **Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 26)** also mentions the future Buddha, Metteyya (Maitreya), confirming that Buddhas continue to arise across cosmic time.

Buddhas Across Infinite Universes :
The Buddha also explicitly taught that Buddhas appear across countless world-systems. In the **Ananda Sutta (Saṁyutta Nikāya 47.13),** he tells Ānanda that Buddhas arise in the past, present, and future throughout many world-systems, and each teaches the same Noble Eightfold Path.

The **Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)** further describes how, when the Buddha set the Wheel of

Dhamma in motion, the sound reverberated across ten-thousand world-systems (dasasahassī lokadhātu), each shining, trembling, and being illuminated by the Dhamma.

The **Satta Sūriya Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 7.66)** similarly speaks of cosmic cycles of world-systems being created and destroyed, with Buddhas arising to teach in each cycle.
These passages clearly demonstrate that the Buddha's vision was cosmic, extending far beyond our single world.

In addition, texts like **Samyutta Nikāya 12.4 (Lokadhātu Sutta)** and **Itivuttaka 99** explicitly state that the arising of a Tathāgata is rare but can occur across multiple world-systems, and each Buddha teaches dependent origination universally.

Proto–Pure Land Concepts :
The **Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)** and **Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)** also make clear that the influence of a Buddha's awakening extends across countless universes.

AN 10.29 mentions innumerable world-systems in which Buddhas arise and each turns the Wheel of Dhamma.

Regarding Pure Lands or Buddha-fields, the Pāli Canon contains proto-concepts that resemble later Mahāyāna Pure Lands. For example, in **DN 16 (Mahāparinibbāna Sutta)**, the Buddha shows Ānanda his cosmic influence and indicates that his presence can sustain vast realms or purified fields.

AN 3.80 (Pātaliya Sutta) also describes how entire world-systems shine and tremble in response to the Buddha's actions, suggesting the existence of realms purified by a Buddha.

Majjhima Nikāya 123 (Acchariya-abbhuta Sutta) describes the Buddha's radiant aura illuminating even distant and dark world-systems at his birth.

Likewise, **SN 6.2 (Garava Sutta)** recounts that upon enlightenment, the ten-thousandfold world system shakes and shines, hinting at the vision of cosmic Buddha-fields.

Other texts, such as **DN 17 (Mahāsudassana Sutta), MN 120 (Saṅkhārupapatti Sutta),** and **AN 4.123,** describe beings being reborn in radiant realms created by merit and virtue, in the company of Buddhas, closely resembling the idea of Pure Lands.

In summary, while the Pāli Canon does not use the Mahāyāna terms “Sukhāvatī” or “Buddha-kṣetra,” it contains clear teachings on multiple Buddhas, cosmic world-systems, and realms purified by Buddhas.
Past and future Buddhas are documented (DN 14, Buddhavaṁsa, DN 26), cosmic influence is emphasized (SN 56.11, AN 10.29), and the possibility of rebirth in purified realms is taught (MN 120, DN 17).

Therefore, the concepts of cosmic Buddhas, other world-systems, and Buddha-fields are fully consistent with the original teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha as preserved in the Pāli Canon.

Heruka

Meaning and Etymology :
Heruka is the name of a category of wrathful deities, enlightened beings in Vajrayana Buddhism that adopt a fierce expression to benefit sentient beings.

Heruka embodies the ultimate union of wisdom and compassion.

Herukas represent the embodiment of indivisible bliss and emptiness.

The name “Heruka” comes from Sanskrit (हेरुक): He (emptiness) + rūka (great bliss).

Heruka means hetu-rūpa-kâya, krodha-form vajradhara's.

The Sanskrit term Heruka was translated into both Chinese and Tibetan as "blood drinker”, although the Sanskrit term heruka does not literally mean blood drinker.

Interpretation of Heruka is similar to the female ḍākiṇī or buddha Vajrayogini.

This shows that Heruka is not an ordinary god but a representation of the enlightened state, where emptiness and bliss are inseparable.

They appear as Iṣṭha-devatā (yi dam) or meditational deities for tantric sādhanā, usually placed in a mandala and often appearing in Yab-Yum.

Though frightening in appearance, Heruka's wrath is not based on hatred, it is the power of wisdom and compassion that destroys ignorance, attachment, and the obstacles that keep beings trapped in suffering.

Unlike peaceful Buddhas who appear serene and calm, Heruka appears with terrifying features: fangs, fiery hair, skull garlands, and weapons.

This "wrathful" form is symbolic. It shows the fierce and unstoppable energy of enlightenment that cuts through negative emotions and karmic habits.

His frightening appearance is meant to scare away inner demons such as greed, anger, pride, and ignorance, not to harm living beings.

In fact, it is said that Heruka's wrath is like that of a loving mother who yells at her child to prevent him from running

into fire, fierce on the outside, but full of compassion inside.

Symbolism of Heruka's Form:
Heruka's form is very rich in symbolism.
Usually, he is shown with multiple heads, arms, and legs.

His heads represent the transcendence of duality, his many arms show his ability to act in countless ways to help beings, and his legs stand firmly on worldly delusions, showing he has conquered them. He often holds weapons like a vajra, axe, or skull-cup filled with nectar, which symbolize cutting through ignorance and transforming negative energy into wisdom.

Around his neck, he may wear garlands of severed heads or skulls, representing the defeat of ego and mental defilements.

Behind him burns the fire of wisdom, showing that he consumes all delusions.

Yab-Yum (Union with Consort) :
Heruka is often depicted in yab-yum (father-mother union) with a consort, who represents wisdom.

The consort may be Vajravārāhī or another wisdom goddess.
Their union is not ordinary passion, it symbolizes the inseparability of wisdom (female) and compassion or method (male).
This image teaches practitioners that ultimate enlightenment is reached when wisdom and compassion are fully united, beyond duality.

The Eight Herukas of the Nyingma Tradition :
The eight Herukas of the Nyingma mahayoga tradition are said to have been received by Padmakara from the Eight Vidyadharas, or Eight Great Acharyas: Manjushrimitra, Nagarjuna, Vajrahumkara, Vimalamitra, Prabhahasti, Dhanasamskrita, Shintamgarbha and Guhyachandra.

They were proficient in the practices of, respectively:
1) Yamantaka - the wrathful Manjushri, the deity of the body.
2) Hayagriva - the wrathful Avalokiteśvara, the deity of speech.
3) Vishuddha/Sri Samyak - the wrathful Vajrapani, deity of mind;
4) Mahottara - the wrathful Samantabhadra, the deity of enlightened qualities.

5) Vajrakilaya/Vajrakumara - the wrathful Vajrasattva, the deity of purification.
6) Matarah - the wrathful Akasagarbha, the deity of calling and dispatching.
7) Lokastotrapuja-natha - the wrathful Ksitigarbha, the deity of worldly offering and praise.
8) Vajramantrabhiru - the wrathful Maitreya, the deity of wrathful mantras.

There are many forms of Heruka, each with slightly different appearances and functions.
Some common ones are:
Cakrasaṁvara Heruka – the main form, with blue body, twelve arms, and Vajravārāhī as his consort.

Hevajra Heruka – described in the Hevajra Tantra, with eight faces, sixteen arms, and four legs.

Yamāntaka Heruka – wrathful form of Mañjuśrī, conqueror of Yama, the lord of death.

Vajrakīla Heruka – associated with the practice of removing obstacles and negativity.

Each form represents the same enlightened essence but emphasizes different aspects of wisdom and compassion.

Recognition in the Bardo Thodol :
Padmasambhava is quoted in the Bardo Thodol (Antarabhavatantra - "Tibetan Book of the Dead"): "The crucial point is indeed that those who have meditated on the formal description of these Herukakaya ('bodies of Heruka'), and also made offerings and praise to them, or, at the very least, have simply seen their painted and sculpted images, may recognise the forms that arise here and attain moksha (liberation)."

Heruka in Tibetan Buddhism :
Heruka is central in many Vajrayāna Tantras, especially the Cakrasaṁvara Tantra, where he is called Śrī Heruka or Cakrasaṁvara Heruka. In this tradition, Heruka is considered a manifestation of Buddha Akṣobhya or sometimes Buddha Vajradhara.

Practitioners visualize themselves as Heruka during meditation, recite his mantras, and perform rituals to identify with his enlightened qualities.

By meditating on Heruka, practitioners transform anger, fear, and desire into wisdom and compassion.

His practice is considered one of the most powerful methods to reach Buddhahood quickly.

The Cakrasaṁvara Tantra is one of the most important Buddhist Tantras from the late first millennium.
In this text, Heruka is described as a supreme deity who subdues worldly gods and negative forces.
He is said to have conquered the Hindu god Śiva (Mahādeva) and transformed him into a protector of the Dharma.
This symbolizes Buddhism's transformative power, turning even negative or opposing forces into allies of enlightenment.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Heruka is especially important in the Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug schools.

The great masters such as Tilopa, Naropa, and Tsongkhapa all emphasized Heruka practices.

For example, the Kagyu lineage treasures the Cakrasaṁvara Heruka practice as one of its most profound meditation systems.

In the Gelug tradition, Tsongkhapa regarded Cakrasaṁvara as one of the highest tantras.
Heruka practice is always transmitted with empowerment (initiation) by a qualified teacher, because it requires proper guidance.

The Inner Meaning of Heruka :

At a deeper level, Heruka represents the enlightened mind itself.
His wrathful energy is the force that shatters illusion.
His union with consort represents the ultimate truth of non-duality.
His weapons and ornaments are not physical tools but symbols of wisdom cutting through ignorance.

Meditating on Heruka helps practitioners see beyond appearances, overcome fear, and recognize that ultimate reality is empty yet blissful.

Heruka, though terrifying in appearance, is one of the most compassionate expressions of Buddhahood.

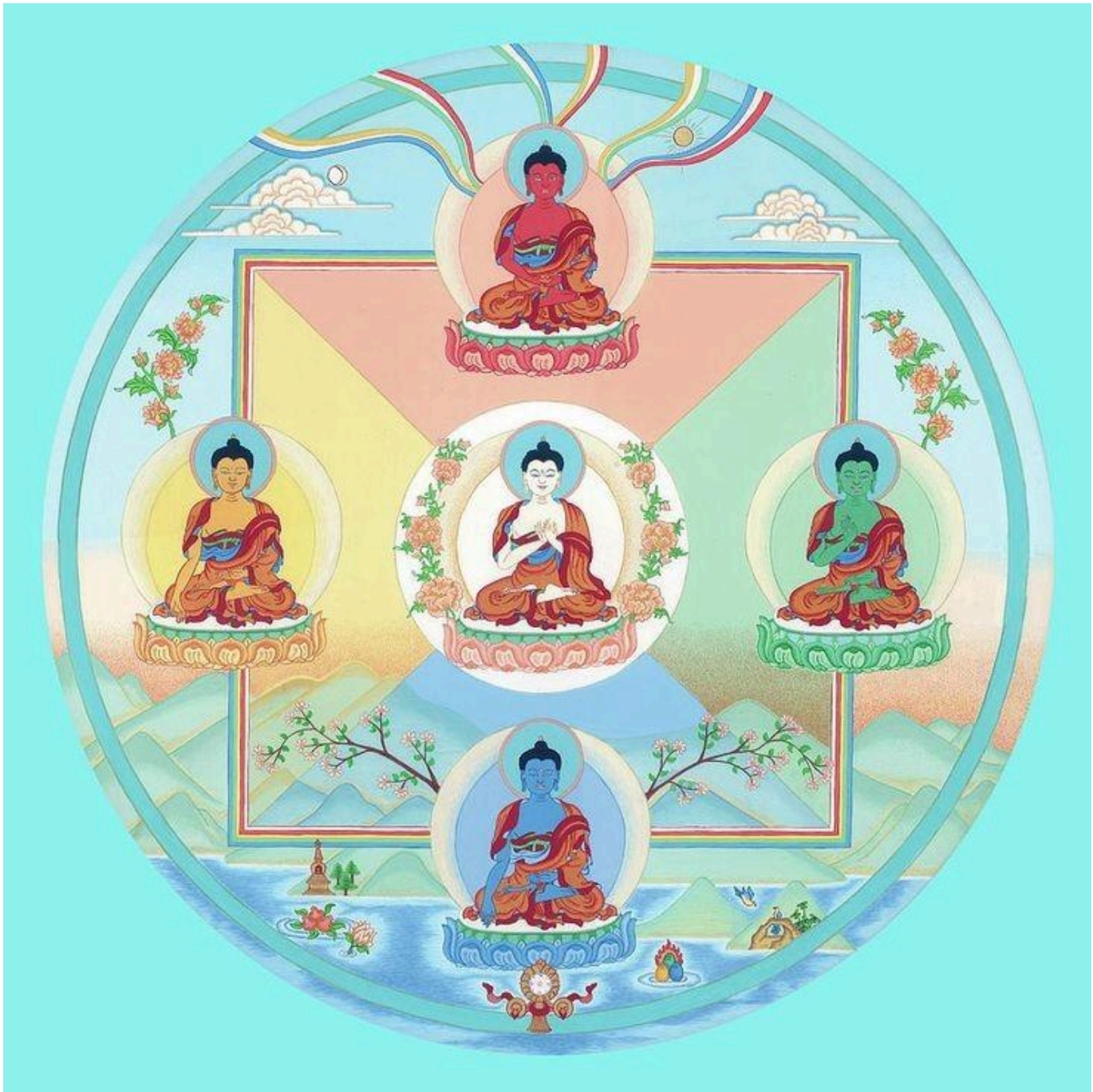
He shows that enlightenment is not only peaceful and calm, but also dynamic and powerful.

His wrathful form is the compassionate force that destroys suffering at its root.

Through his practice, practitioners learn to transform their own negative emotions into wisdom, and they gain the strength to overcome obstacles on the path to awakening.

In this way, Heruka stands as a supreme protector and guide, leading beings swiftly to complete enlightenment.

Five Dhyani Buddhas



Five Dhyani Buddhas Tathagatas

The Five Tathāgatas (pañcatathāgata) also known as the Five Buddha Families (pañcabuddhakula in Sanskrit).

They are also sometimes called the "Dhyani-buddhas” but this name is not found in traditional Buddhist scriptures.

The concept of the Five Dhyani Buddhas does not appear in early Buddhism (Theravāda) but develops in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Each male Buddha is paired with a female Buddha, often called mothers, prajña, vidya, or consort.

They are the five cardinal male and female Buddhas, considered inseparable and equal in Vajrayana Buddhism.

Each Buddha family abide in their own pure land or buddhafield.

The five are also called the Five Great Buddhas, and the Five Jinas (“conqueror" or "victor”).

Prominent in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

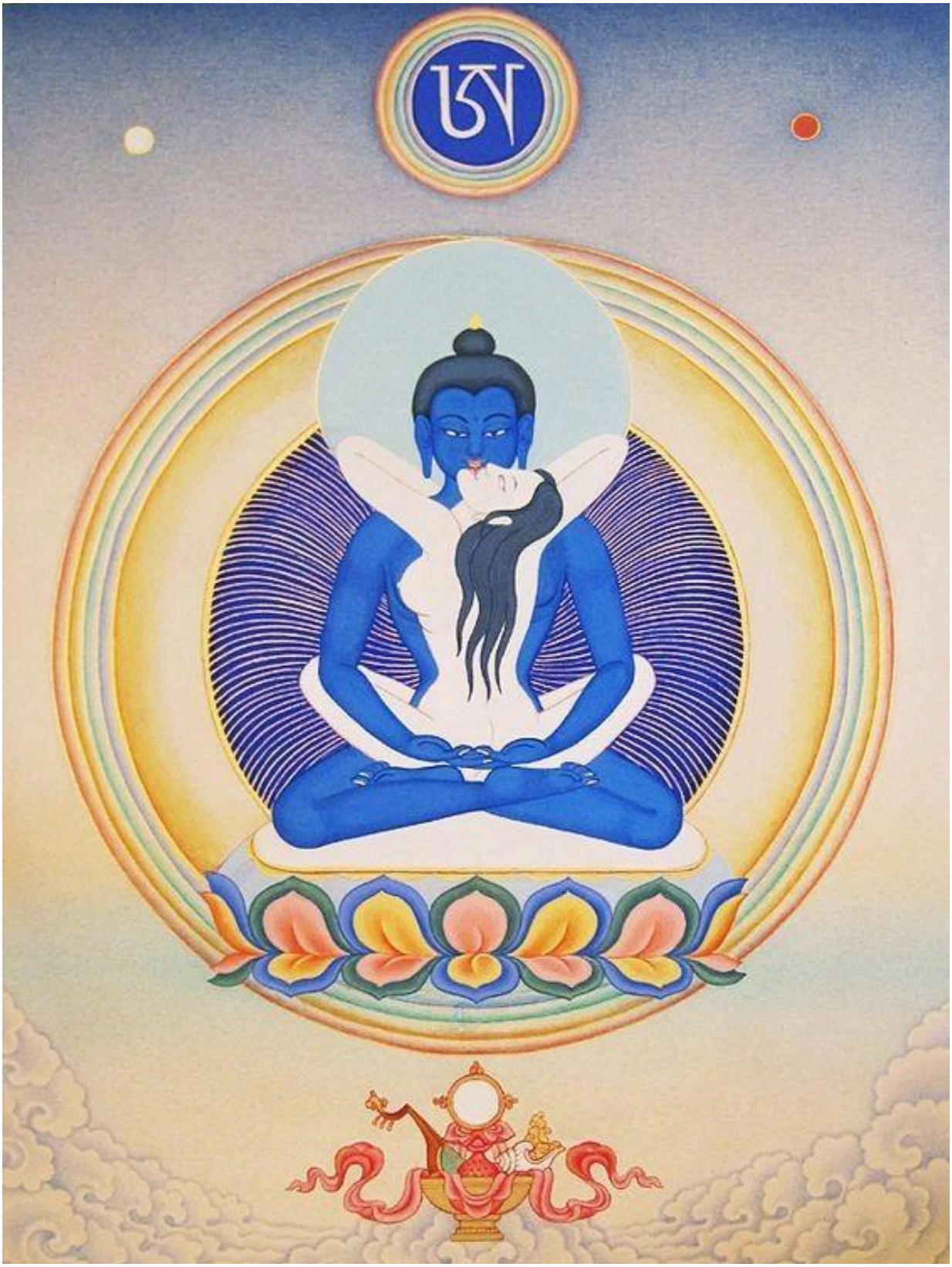
Frequently depicted in mandalas and Buddhist Tantras.

Vajradhara Adi Buddha

They are sometimes seen as emanations and representations of the five qualities of the Adi-Buddha or "first Buddha".

The Five Buddhas may also be seen as aspects of the Dharmakāya or Dharma-body, the ultimate reality which spontaneously manifests the Five Buddha families.

Some traditions consider the Adi-Buddha as a sixth Buddha alongside the five.



Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri in Yab Yum

Different Buddhist traditions have different names and understandings for their highest Buddha:

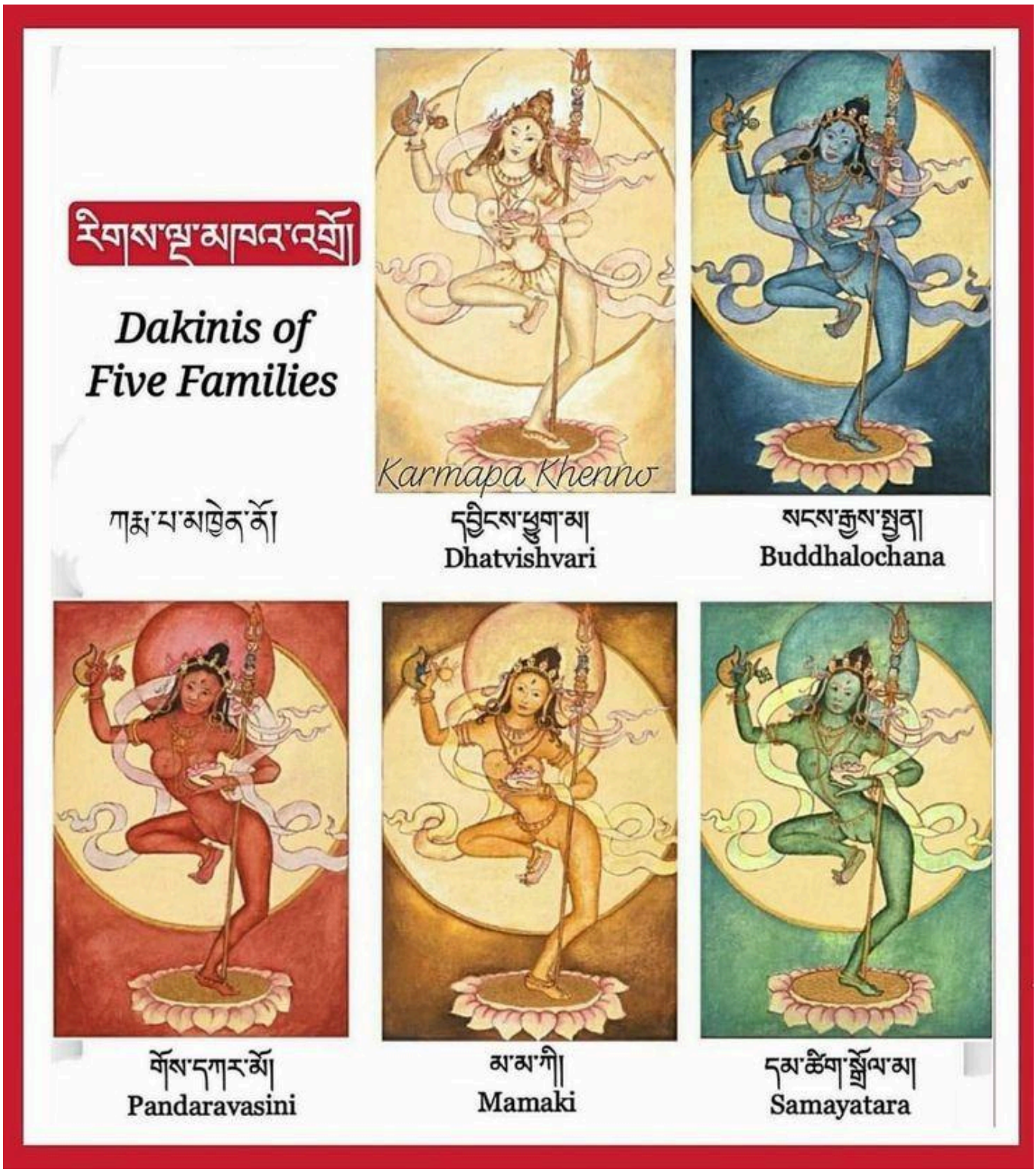
In the Nyingma school, the highest Buddhas are Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri.

In Shingon Buddhism, the highest Buddha is Mahavairocana.

In the Shingon tradition, the four Celestial Buddhas Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddha are considered to be different forms or manifestations of the Vairocana Buddha.

In Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, all Buddhas are seen as manifestations of Amitābha.

The Five Buddha Families:



The Five Buddhas are often depicted in a mandala.

East: Vairocana (male) and Buddha Locana (female).

South: Ratnasambhava (male) and Buddha Mamaki (female).

West: Amitābha (male) and Pandaravasini (female).

North: Amoghasiddhi (male) and Samayatara (female).

Center: Akshobhya (male) and Dhatvishvari (female).

The cardinal positions of Akshobhya and Vairocana can alter depending on specific teachings.

This mandala represents the cosmic order and is used in meditation, visualization, and initiations in Vajrayana Buddhism.

This Mandala symbolizes the structure of the enlightened mind.

五方佛

In tantric Buddhist teachings, each of the Five Buddhas is associated with unique qualities and features.

They help transform five primary negative emotions (kleshas) into corresponding enlightened wisdom.

They represent the five aspects of enlightened consciousness.

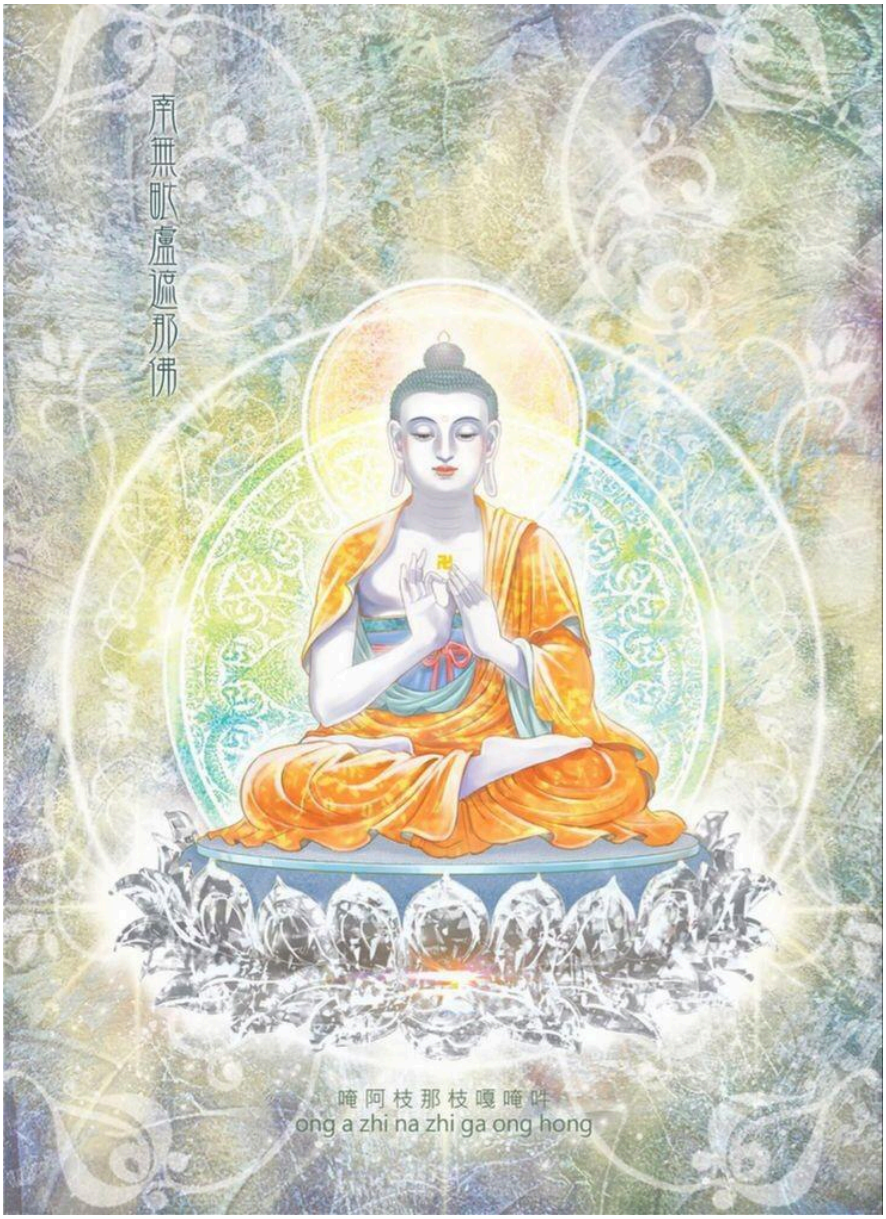
They guide practitioners on the path to liberation.

Each Buddha is linked to a different realm of samsara, offering liberation from cyclic existence.

Each Buddha has a wrathful aspect, representing the transformation of ignorance into wisdom.

They have different directions, colors, mudrā, symbol, aspects (specific quality or wisdom), klesha (transforms a particular negative emotion), element (the five elements), consort and spiritual son, the associated bodhisattvas, protector Wisdom Kings (Vidyārājas), pure lands (buddhafield) as well as different animal vehicles.

Buddha family



Buddha: Vairocana
Wisdom Consort (prajña): White Tara or Ākāśadhātvīśvarī, also known as Vajradhātvisharī, Buddhaḍākinī or Sparśavajrī (wisdom of ultimate reality)
Bodhisattva: Samantabhadra or Mañjushri

Vidyārāja protector: Acala
Heruka form (Wrathful Forms): Mahavairocana (Universal Buddha, source of all light)
Pure land: Akaniṣṭha-Ghanavyūha (Highest Heaven of Form Realm)
Symbol: Dharma Wheel (Dharmachakra)
Direction: Center
Colour: White
Element: Space
Realm Transcended: Deva (god) realm
Mudra: Dharmachakra Mudra (turning the wheel of Dharma)
Throne: Lion throne
Relation to the Chakras: Head Chakra (Sahasrara) (Crown Chakra)
Skandhas (Aggretate): Form (Rūpa)
Klesha Transformed: Ignorance, delusion, Aversion (ávidyā)
Wisdom (jñana): Wisdom of Dharmadhatu (understanding the nature of reality)
spiritual qualities: Represents pure consciousness and ultimate reality.
specific approach to enlightenment: The Path of Non-Dual Awareness and Universal Truth.
Bījasyllable: Om
Buddha family mantra: jinajik
Mantra: Om Vairocana Hum

Vairocana is one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

“Vairocana” is a word from Sanskrit: Vi+rocana (वैरोचन), which means "from the sun" or "belonging to the sun", "Solar", or "Shining".

Vairocana Buddha is also known as Mahāvairocana which means “Great Vairocana”.

He is sometimes called the Buddha of all the Buddhas. He is considered as the universal Buddha from whom all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas emanate.

Maha Vairochana Buddha is the buddha of vast Multiverse. He rules over the boundless Multiverse.

Maha Vairochana means the Great Buddha of Light. He is endless love and compassion.

Through his vast, unimaginable great compassion, he appears in countless enlightened forms to help sentient beings in all worlds. His manifestations are as vast as the worlds in the multiverse.

Scriptural Foundations :

Although Maha Vairochana appears in many Sutras, his most comprehensive and detailed teachings are found in the Maha Vairochana Sutra.

This Sutra explains the foundation of Vajrayana, including teachings on mantra, mandala and tantra generally.

It also contains the mantras of nearly every Buddha, Bodhisattva and Enlightened Being.

Truly, It is the “Indestructible” teaching of Vairochana, serving as a guide for attaining Enlightenment in this very lifetime.

In the Maha Vairochana Sutra, Maha Vairochana teaches Vajrapani how to become enlightened in this lifetime.

He elaborately teaches on Bodhi-mind or Bodhichitta, compassion or karuna, and skillful means or upaya as the path.

In the Avatamsaka (Flower Garland) Sutra, Vairocana is described not just as a cosmic Buddha but as the very body of the cosmos.

His body is the universe itself: mountains, rivers, trees, stars, beings, all are seen as parts of Vairocana’s radiant body.

This means every being is already a part of Vairocana, Enlightenment is realizing that inseparability.

The Avatamsaka sutra also states that the wisdom of the Buddha (the Tathagata) is present everywhere in the universe, indeed, it is present within every living being.

In the Brahmajala Sutra, he describes his symbolism this way: "On a thousand flowers surrounding Vairochana are a thousand Shahkyamuni Buddhas. Each flower supports a hundred million worlds; in each world a Shahkyamuni Buddha appears. All are seated beneath a Bodhi-tree, all simultaneously attain Buddhahood. All these innumerable Buddhas have Maha Vairochana as their original body."

Appearance:
Vairochana can appear in countless forms, from wrathful Achala to loving Samantabhadra to purifying Vajrasattva and everything in between.

Maha Vairochana usually appears peaceful, but he can also take wrathful, semi-wrathful, and active forms. The most well-known of these is Achala, called Fudo Myoo in Japan. Achala's mantra is called the Mantra of Compassionate Help, to indicate that the wrathful form of Vairochana is about compassionate activity and helping sentient beings with obstacles.

When we visualize Maha Vairochana, although he has countless forms, he is usually seen with one face, seated in meditation. His body is pure white, like pure bright daylight. He shines with light. He is glorious, peaceful, and glowing with the light of his compassion and wisdom. Sometimes he is shown as seated on a lion throne, symbolizing majesty and fearlessness.

In his classic Dhyani Buddha form, he has one face with hands held in the Dharmachakra mudra, also called the Wheel-Turning or teaching Mudra.
He is sometimes shown with a crown of jewels and a halo of radiant light.

He is also very popularly visualized in his four faced form, which also represents the four directions.
This form represents his omniscience, seeing in all directions at once.
In this form, he is white, glowing with light, has four faces, and holds a Dharma Wheel in his two hands in the mudra of meditative equipose.

In another form, Maha Vairocana is shown standing, as in the famous 502 foot tall Spring Temple Buddha statue.
In this form he is standing with one hand up in gesture of Abhaya Mudra, and the other hand down in the classic Varada or granting wishes mudra.

At his base is the one-thousand petal lotus, symbolizing his countless emanations.

In Various Traditions:
In Japanese, Maha Vairocana is called Dainichi Nyorai.
In Shingon Buddhism, he is honoured as the supreme Buddha, even higher than Shakyamuni.
In Japan, as the supreme Buddha, his special hand gesture is the mudra of the six elements, in which the index finger of the left hand is clasped by the five fingers of the right.
This shows the union of the five elements - the earth, water, fire, air, and ether - with the spirit or consciousness.
This mudra indicates that he is the supreme Buddha.

In Japanese Shingon Buddhism, the daily practice includes both the mantra of Light of Vairochana and the mantra of compassionate help of Achala, the balance of peaceful wisdom and contemplation together with active compassion and help.

Vairocana Buddha and Achala are almost always together in Shingon temples, a profound form of esoteric Vajrayana Buddhism.

In Chinese Buddhism (Huayan school), he is central to their philosophy of interpenetration and universal harmony.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Vairocana is part of the Five Tathagatas system and is often visualized in tantric meditations.

In Tibetan Highest Yoga Tantra, Vairocana is the root of all mandalas.
Advanced yogic meditations sometimes begin with dissolving the self into white radiant light (Vairocana's light) before visualizing other deities.

In Tantric Mandalas:
Vairocana is often visualized at the center of the cosmic mandala of Dayani Buddhas.
He is white, the center of the mandala, the center of the universe, the source of all light and purity.
From him arise the four other Dhyani Buddhas, who are also shining with bodies of glorious light.
Vairocana sits at the center of the Five Buddha Mandala), surrounded by the other four Dhyani Buddhas in the four cardinal directions.
He represents the axis of the universe, the ultimate truth that unites and holds everything together.

Vairocana presides over the Tathāgata family, also called the Buddha family, which embodies wisdom, purity, and the realization of the ultimate nature of reality. His mandala is attended by Bodhisattvas who represent his qualities and activities, such as Samantabhadra and manjushree.

Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol) :
According to the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol), Vairocana appears on the very first day after death.
He appears from the center, shining with white light, radiating light of the Dharmadhatu Wisdom.
If the consciousness of the deceased person recognizes Vairocana in that moment, liberation is attained instantly. However, If it does not, the being turns away from his dazzling light and is reborn in samsara.

Mantras:
Vairochana's heart mantra, known as the Mantra of Light, brings his shining light, love and compassion into our lives. Chanting it is said to be the same as chanting the mantras of all Buddhas at once, benefiting all sentient beings.

The Mantra of Light is
Oṃ amogha Vairochana mahāmudra maṇipadma jvāla pravarttaya hūṃ

His shorter mantra is:
Om Vairochana Hum
Om Vairocana Vam

Chanting his mantra daily, plants the seeds that help awaken and ripen the Buddha Nature in all of us.

In the Mahavairocana sutra the Five element mantra appears as:
Namaḥ samanta-buddhānām a vi ra hūṃ khaṃ.

The shorter version of this mantra which is found in Shingon is :
aḥ vi ra hūṃ khaṃ

Each syllable of this Five element mantra is correlated with earth, water, fire, air, space respectively, while Vairocana is the sixth element - consciousness (vijñana)

A slightly longer variation of this mantra, also found in Shingon is:
Oṃ a vi ra hūṃ khaṃ vajra dhātu vaṃ

There is another five element mantra of Vairocana, which is:
A vaṃ raṃ haṃ khaṃ

An alternate version of this mantra also sometimes appears with a Buddha vandana (homage) as follows:
Namaḥ samanta-buddhānām A vaṃ raṃ haṃ khaṃ

"A" is the seed syllable mantra (bija mantra) of Vairocana in the Garbhadhatu mandala (womb realm), while "Vaṃ" is the seed syllable of Vairocana in the Vajradhātu mandala (diamond realm).

A longer dharani associated with Vairocana is the Sarvadurgatiparishodana dharani (Complete removal of all unfortunate rebirths), also known as Kunrig mantra in Tibetan Buddhism.
This dharani is found in the Sarvadurgatiparishodana tantra which depicts Vairocana at the center of a mandala surrounded by the other four tathagatas.

Sarvadurgatiparishodana dharani is as follows:
OṂ namo bhagavate sarva durgati pariśodhana rājāya tathāgatāyārhate samyaksambudhāya tadyathā

OṂ śodhane śodhane sarva pāpam viśodhani śuddhe viśuddhe sarvakarmāvarana viśodhani svāhā!

Spiritual Function:
Each Dhyani Buddha transforms one fundamental human delusion.
Vairocana transforms ignorance/delusion (avidya) into all-pervading wisdom.
This transformation allows one to see the true nature of reality without distortion.

Meditation on Vairocana helps practitioners overcome ignorance and realize universal compassion and wisdom.

He represents the Dharmakaya, the pure formless essence of Buddhahood.
His realization is that all phenomena are manifestations of ultimate reality.

Ākāśadhātvīśvarī

Fiva Tathagatas with prajna consorts

Vairocana Buddha's consort is Ākāśadhātvīśvarī (आकाशधात्वीश्वरी), whose name in Sanskrit means “Sovereign Lady of the Realm of Space”, or “The Sovereign Lady of the Space Element”.

She is one of the Five Female Buddhas (also called the Five Buddha Queens or Prajñās), who are the wisdom-consorts of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas.

Role and Essence:
Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is specifically known as the spiritual partner of Vairocana Buddha,

She is the embodiment of the infinite, boundless expanse of reality, symbolizing the wisdom that pervades all directions like open space.

Just as Vairocana symbolizes the illumination of universal truth, Ākāśadhātvīśvarī personifies the wisdom aspect of that illumination, which is boundless and vast like infinite space.

Depiction and Symbolism:
Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is often depicted as a youthful and radiant goddess of white or luminous appearance, her color symbolizing purity and the all-embracing nature of space.

She often sits in a posture of serenity upon a lotus throne, embodying the openness and stability of her element.

Her hands may form the dharmachakra mudrā, the gesture of teaching, or the varada mudrā, the boon-granting gesture, signifying her role in bestowing spacious wisdom and fearlessness upon practitioners.

She may hold the Dharma wheel (dharmachakra), representing the universal turning of the wheel of truth, or a lotus that bears the Dharma wheel, showing how pure wisdom blossoms even in the conditions of samsara.

Mandala Association:
In the mandalas of the Five Dhyani Buddhas, each Buddha unites with his prajñā (wisdom-consort), who personifies his inner wisdom aspect.

In the mandala arrangement, Ākāśadhātvīśvarī and Vairocana occupy the center, while the other four wisdom-consorts -
Locanā (Akṣobhya's consort of the East), Māmaki (Ratnasambhava's consort of the South), Pāṇḍaravāsinī (Amitābha's consort of the West), and Tārā or Green Tārā (Amoghasiddhi's consort of the North) - surround them. Together, these five female Buddhas represent the purified essence of the five elements - space, water, earth, fire, and air - and complete the mandala of enlightened wisdom.

In yab-yum union with Vairocana:
In some esoteric depictions, she appears in yab-yum (union) with Vairocana, symbolizing the fusion of space (wisdom) and light (compassionate activity).

Together with Vairocana, she symbolizes the union of universal compassion and universal wisdom, the inseparability of method and emptiness at the very heart of enlightenment.

Together, they symbolize the inseparability of prajñā (wisdom, represented by the female) and upāya (skillful means, represented by the male).
Without wisdom, compassion and skillful activity lose their ultimate foundation, and without skillful means, wisdom cannot benefit beings.

Meditative and Spiritual Significance:
Vairocana's consort is deeply symbolic in Vajrayāna cosmology, and there are multiple layers of meaning depending on the tantra and lineage.

Her name is made up of three words :
Ākāśa = space, the boundless sky.
Dhātu = element, realm, sphere.
Īśvarī = sovereign lady, mistress, or queen.

The meaning of her name gives us insight into her function.
The word ākāśa refers to “space” or “sky,” the limitless expanse within which all phenomena arise, abide, and dissolve.
Dhātu signifies the realm or element, and īśvarī denotes a sovereign lady, a mistress, or the supreme queen.

So her name means “The Sovereign Lady of the Sphere of Infinite Space.”

Thus, Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is the great queen of the realm of space, the embodiment of the space element in its pure and awakened form.

She represents the dharmadhātu, the limitless expanse of ultimate reality, which is Vairocana’s wisdom.

For Vairocana, Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is the queen of space - she completes Vairocana’s embodiment of all-pervading wisdom.

Just as space is infinite, ungraspable, and without obstruction, she symbolizes the limitless quality of ultimate reality.

Vairocana radiates the universal light of Dharma, while Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is the field of reality itself in which that light reveals all.

Vairocana's presence is the radiant light of truth, and her presence is the infinite openness in which that light shines.

Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is not just Vairocana's consort in imagery, but the living embodiment of the infinite expanse of truth - the wisdom that pervades all things like boundless space.

Together, they express the inseparability of wisdom (prajñā) and method (upāya).

Meditating on her brings the experience of openness, freedom, and clarity.
She teaches practitioners to rest the mind in its natural, vast state, unobstructed and limitless, like the boundless sky.

In practice, Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is invoked especially in connection with Vairocana's meditations and mandalas.

She may also be contemplated in meditations on the space element, which help dissolve mental and energetic blockages.

Practitioners visualize her as a luminous goddess of space, and by meditating upon her qualities, they cultivate a direct experience of vast awareness, free from grasping and limitation.

Thus, Ākāśadhātvīśvarī is not only the consort of Vairocana Buddha but also the living embodiment of the spaciousness of mind and reality itself.

She teaches that wisdom is vast like the sky, open like the infinite expanse of space, and pure like a radiant mirror reflecting all phenomena.

Mahavairocana

Vajra Family

Buddha: Akṣobhya
Wisdom Consort (prajña): Locanā, also known as Buddhalocanā, Tathāgatalocanā (wisdom of clarity)
Bodhisattva: Vajrapani or Samantabhadra
Vidyārāja protector: Trailokyavijaya

Heruka form (Wrathful Forms): Achala (Immovable protector)
Pure land: Abhirati (Pure Land of Great Joy)
Symbol: Vajra (thunderbolt)
Direction: East
Colour: Blue
Element: Water
Realm Transcended: Hell realm
Mudra: Bhūmisparśa Mudra (Earth-touching Mudra)
Throne: Elephant throne
Relation to the Chakras: Throat Chakra (Vishuddha) (Speech and Communication)
Skandhas (Aggretate): Consciousness (Vijñāna)
Klesha (Defilement) Transformed: Ignorance (or Aversion)
Wisdom (jñana): Mirror-like Wisdom (reflects reality without distortion)
spiritual qualities: Associated with wisdom, clarity, and cutting through ignorance.
specific approach to enlightenment: The Path of Direct Insight (cutting through illusion).
Bījasyllable: Hum
Buddha family mantra: vajradhṛk
Mantra: Om Akshobhya Hum

Akshobhya Buddha is one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

“Akshobhya” is a word from Sanskrit: अक्षोभ्य, which means "Immovable One" or “Unshakable.”

He is sometimes called the Unshakable Buddha.
He represents unchanging strength, stability, and mirror-like wisdom.

Akshobhya is the Buddha of the Eastern Pure Land, called Abhirati, the “Land of Great Delight.”
This pure realm is described as beautiful beyond imagination, a place where beings are free from suffering, and where only Dharma and Enlightenment are heard.
Those who are reborn in Abhirati are said to have a direct path to Buddhahood.

Scriptural Sources :
Akshobhya appears in the Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha Sūtra, which was translated during the second century CE and is among the oldest known Mahayana or Pure Land texts.

The Akshobhya Sutra and the Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha Sūtra (or Akshobhya Tathagatasya Sutra) are the same text, with "Akshobhya Sutra" being a shorter name for the longer, more formal title.

This Mahayana Buddhist scripture details the origins and characteristics of the Buddha Akshobhya and his eastern Pure Land realm of Abhirati, and it is considered one of the oldest texts of its kind.

According to this scripture, a monk wished to practice the Dharma in the eastern world of delight and made a powerful vow before the Buddha.
He declared that he would never give rise to anger, hatred, or disgust toward any sentient being, no matter what they did. If he ever broke this vow, he would not attain Enlightenment.
Because he kept this vow perfectly, he became known as Akshobhya, the Immovable One.

His example shows us that even the most intense anger can be transformed into compassion and wisdom.

This vow is the foundation of his path: the transformation of anger into compassion, and aggression into wisdom. His story shows us that Enlightenment requires an unshakable mind and a compassionate heart that cannot be moved by hatred.

The Pure Land of Abhirati :
The Akshobhya Sutra is one of the earliest Mahayana scriptures, describing in detail his Pure Land, Abhirati.

In this Sutra, the Buddha Shakyamuni explains that beings who hear the name of Akshobhya with faith and devotion will be purified of negative karma and may be reborn in his pure realm.

Abhirati is described as a land without the three lower realms (hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals).
Only higher rebirths exist there, and beings spend their lives listening to and practicing the Dharma.

Unlike Amitabha's Pure Land of Sukhavati, which is accessible by faith and calling upon Amitabha, Abhirati is attained through deep discipline, patience, and the transformation of anger.

Abhirati is for those who cultivate deep discipline and meditation. It is said that only those who overcome hatred and cultivate great patience and compassion can be reborn there.

In the Sutra, Akshobhya is praised as a Buddha who is "firm as a vajra" - unbreakable, indestructible, and unshaken.

In the Śūraṅgama mantra taught in the Śūraṅgama sutra an influential dharani in the Chinese Chan tradition, Akshobhya is mentioned to be the host of the Vajra

Division in the East, one of the five major divisions which controls the vast demon armies of the five directions.

Symbolism and Iconography :
Akshobhya symbolizes the transformation of anger and hatred into mirror-like wisdom.
Just as a mirror reflects everything clearly without distortion, Akshobhya's wisdom reflects reality as it is - calm, steady, and without judgment.

He is associated with the color blue, the color of deep space and the clear sky, representing the limitless and unshakable nature of his mind.

In art and iconography, Akshobhya is shown with a blue body, often deep like sapphire.
His face is calm and serene, his expression unshakable.
He is sometimes seen crowned with jewels and surrounded by lotus petals of light, symbolizing purity.

Akshobhya often appears with a vajra (thunderbolt or diamond), the symbol of indestructible strength and clarity.

He is sometimes shown seated upon an elephant throne, symbolizing the immense strength, steadiness, and stability of his enlightened mind.

In his most common form, Akshobhya is depicted sitting in meditation, serene and unshakable, with his right hand touching the earth in the Bhumisparsha Mudra (earth-touching gesture).
This mudra symbolizes unshakable resolve, calling the Earth to witness his enlightenment and reminding us that stability and determination lead to Awakening.
His left hand rests in his lap in the meditation gesture, symbolizing inner stillness.

In Various Traditions :
In Japanese Buddhism, Akshobhya is known as Ashuku Nyorai.
In Chinese Buddhism, he is known as Āchùfó (阿閦佛).

In Vajrayana Buddhism, Akshobhya plays an important role as the head of the Vajra Family (Vajra-kula), one of the five Buddha families.
The Vajra Family represents indestructible clarity, penetrating insight, and mirror-like wisdom.

According to Vajrayana teachings, Akshobhya is placed in the eastern direction of the mandala of the Five Dhyani Buddhas.

In Mandala :
He represents the element of water, flowing yet deep, calm yet powerful.
He is often visualized at the center of vajra-family mandalas surrounded by Bodhisattvas such as Vajrapani (embodiment of his power) and other wrathful deities who remove obstacles to meditation.

Akṣobhya presides over the Vajra family, the family of clarity, power, and unshakable strength.
This family overcomes delusion and anger, bringing forth mirror-like wisdom.
His mandala is attended by Bodhisattvas who represent his qualities and activities such as Vajrasattva and Vajrapāṇi.

These Bodhisattvas manifest the enlightened qualities of the Vajra family: fearless clarity, unshakable strength, purification, and compassionate protection.
They ensure that Akṣobhya's mirror-like wisdom is not only realized but also actively expressed in the world for the benefit of all beings.

Tantric Practice :
In certain tantric initiations, Akshobhya is invoked to purify anger and karmic obscurations, especially those leading to rebirth in lower realms.

Advanced practices sometimes include the Akshobhya Yoga Tantra, where practitioners dissolve their mind into the blue light of Akshobhya, merging with his unshakable clarity.

Akshobhya's practice is also central in the Akshobhya Vajra Dharani, a tantric dharani that purifies even the heaviest negative karma.
This practice is especially recommended for those who have committed serious offenses, as it is said to prevent rebirth in the hell realms.

Because of this, some lineages of Tibetan Buddhism give the Akshobhya initiation to dying or ill practitioners, ensuring that their consciousness is guided toward liberation or rebirth in Abhirati.

In the Bardo Thödol (Tibetan Book of the Dead),
Akshobhya appears on the second day after death.
He shines with radiant blue light, the light of mirror-like wisdom. If the consciousness of the deceased recognizes Akshobhya in that moment, liberation is instantly possible. But if one turns away, unable to face the brilliance of his light, one falls back into samsara.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Akshobhya plays an important role in tantric meditation. His mantra and visualization are often used to purify negative karma, especially karma of hatred and violence.
Reciting his mantra is said to protect from rebirth in lower realms and help in overcoming anger.

Mantras :
His mantra is:
Om Akshobhya Hum

A longer form of his mantra is:
Om Vajra Akshobhya Hum

Chanting his mantra brings stability to the mind, purifies anger, and plants the seed for rebirth in Abhirati, his Pure Land.

Through meditating on Akshobhya Buddha, practitioners develop patience, strength, clarity, and unshakable calmness.
He teaches us that true strength is not in aggression, but in immovability, compassion, and wisdom.

Philosophical Insight :
Each Dhyani Buddha transforms a fundamental delusion of human beings.

Akshobhya transforms anger, hatred, and aggression into wisdom and clarity.
Through meditation on Akshobhya, we learn to let go of our anger and see reality as it truly is, clear and undisturbed like a calm mirror.

His wisdom is called Mirror-like Wisdom (Ādarśa-jñāna). Just as a mirror reflects all things without clinging or rejecting, Akshobhya's wisdom reflects the truth of reality perfectly, without distortion.

Akshobhya represents the indestructible Vajra mind - calm, steady, and beyond all disturbance.
He is the embodiment of stability and fearlessness, guiding us to transform our anger into wisdom and to walk the unshakable path toward Enlightenment.

Hevajra is the Heruka form of the Akshobhya Buddha.

Locanā

Akshobhya Buddha's divine consort is Locanā, whose name means “She Who Sees” or “The Clear-Visioned One”, “The One with the Eye”.

The name “Locanā” in Sanskrit and Pali means something like “having eyes”, “vision” or “eye”.

Locanā (Lochana, Buddha Locana, Buddhalocanā) is a female figure in Buddhist tantra, often called a Female Buddha, Wisdom Mother, or Prajñā.

The Role Among the Five Female Buddhas :
Locanā is one of the Five Female Buddhas (also called the Five Prajñās or Wisdom Mothers) in Vajrayāna Buddhism.
Each Wisdom Mothers corresponds to one of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas (male Buddhas of meditation); Locanā is typically paired with Akṣobhya, the Dhyāni Buddha of mirror-like wisdom.

Locanā as the Wisdom of Clear Seeing :
As a Female Buddha or Prajñā Mother, Locanā is viewed not simply as a consort, but as a fully enlightened being embodying a particular aspect of wisdom.

She embodies the wisdom aspect of Akṣobhya, complementing his Mirror-like Wisdom (ādarśa-jñāna). While Akṣobhya represents the indestructible clarity of mind, Locanā represents the all-seeing wisdom that recognizes the true nature of all phenomena without distortion.

Locanā represents the pure wisdom that perceives all phenomena without distortion, just as a mirror reflects without judgment.

Symbolism and Appearance :
She is often depicted as deep blue, serene and radiant the same as Akṣobhya, representing the clarity and depth of space and water.

She is sometimes depicted with her left hand in the dhyāna mudrā (meditation gesture), holding a vajra-bell, and the right hand in the bhumisparśa mudrā (earth-touching gesture), holding a five-pointed vajra.

She may hold a lotus, jewel, or vase, signifying purity, wisdom, and compassion.
Sometimes seated on a lotus, sometimes on a moon disc, or with a moon mat. Adorned with jewels, crown, flowing hair partly tied up.

Union with Akṣobhya Buddha :
When united with Akṣobhya, Locanā embodies the inseparability of wisdom and method - clarity united with compassionate action.

Just as Akṣobhya's vajra symbolizes indestructible power, Locanā's vision symbolizes unshakable wisdom that recognizes the equality and emptiness of all phenomena.

Her presence reminds practitioners that wisdom is not only unshakable clarity (Akṣobhya) but also the ability to perceive all things equally and without distortion (Locanā).

In Vajrayana visualizations, practitioners unite Akṣobhya and Locanā to internalize mirror-like clarity and equal perception.

Meditating on their union transforms anger and aggression into stable, calm awareness and compassionate understanding.

Locanā's wisdom is particularly emphasized in Vajra-family tantras and mandala practices for purifying negative karma and cultivating equanimity.

Together, they manifest the Vajra family's fearless path of transformation.

Mantra :
loṃ (sometimes spelled lom) is the seed syllable (Bīja mantra) of Locana.
This is a sacred sound that is used in visualization and mantra practice.

The mantra of Locana is
“Om Vajra Locane loṃ svāhā”

In Tantric and Meditative Practice :
Locanā is invoked in tantric practices, meditations, and sadhanas. The practitioner may visualize her, recite her mantra, to cultivate mirror-like wisdom.

She helps with overcoming anger or mental afflictions related to distortion, hatred, judgment. Because mirror-like wisdom “reflects” without distortion or bias, she helps the meditator see things as they are, not as colored by negative emotion.

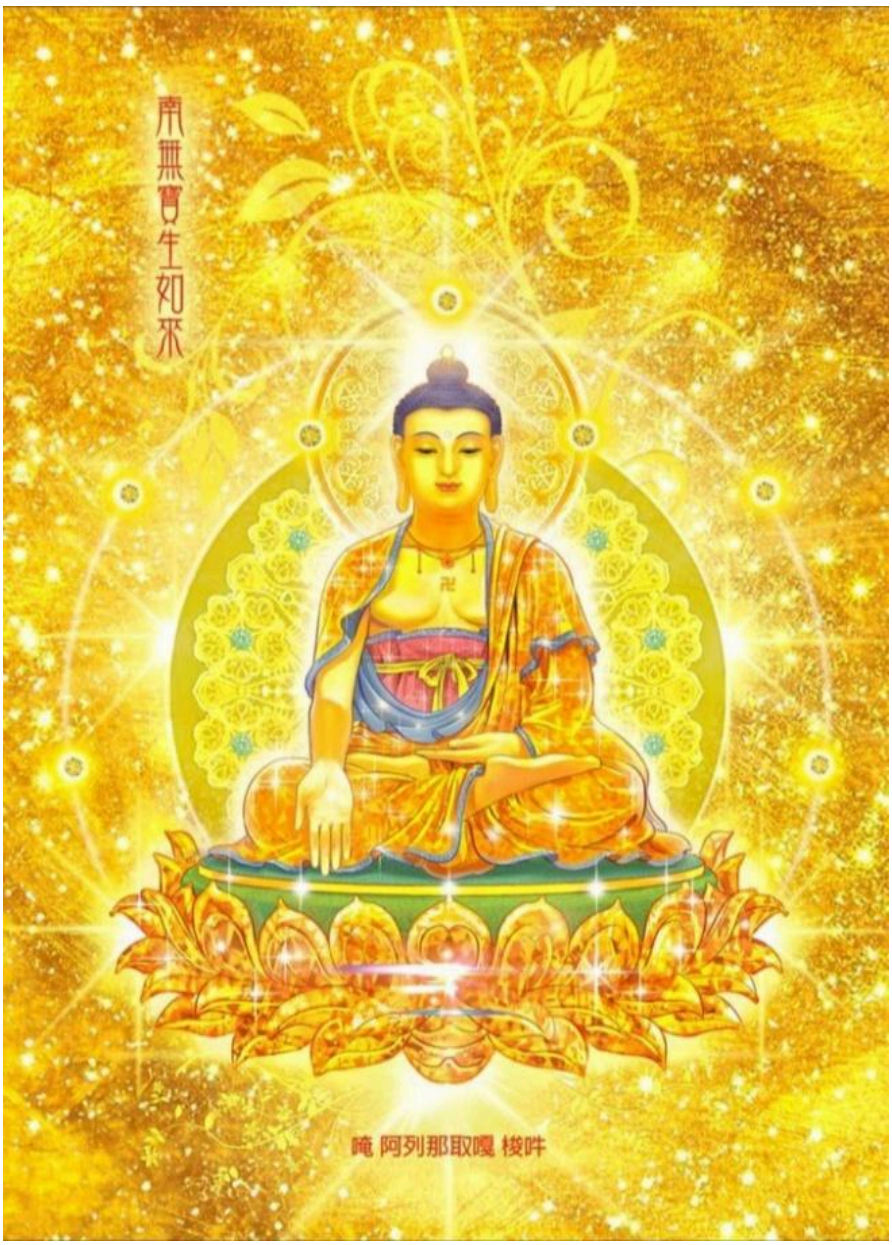
In certain texts like Guhyasamāja Tantra) she is called upon as a witness to the Buddha’s enlightenment, or considered primordial.

The idea is that wisdom (prajñā) is not secondary or merely supportive; the female prajñā exemplars are seen

as essential, sometimes co-equal, in the mandalic framework.

The precise form of visualization (what she holds, what mudras, what adornments) differs slightly depending on sādhanā or ritual.

Ratna (Jewel) Family



Buddha: Ratnasambhava
Wisdom Consort (prajña): Māmakī (wisdom of equanimity)
Bodhisattva: Mañjusri and Ratnapani

Vidyārāja protector: Kuṇḍali
Heruka form (Wrathful Forms): Jambhala (God of wealth and generosity)
Pure land: Śrīmat, Ratnavati (Land of Jewels)
Symbol: Ratna (Jewel)
Direction: South
Colour: Yellow
Element: Earth
Realm Transcended: Hungry ghost (preta) realm
Mudra: Varada Mudra (Giving Mudra)
Throne: Horse throne
Relation to the Chakras: Heart Chakra (Anahata)
Skandhas (Aggretate): Feeling (vedana)
Klesha Transformed: Pride (or Greed) and arrogance
Wisdom (jñana): Wisdom of Equality (overcoming pride and egotism)
spiritual qualities: Represents abundance, generosity, and richness of Dharma.
specific approach to enlightenment: The Path of Generosity and Bodhisattva Activities.
Bījasyllable: Tram
Buddha family mantra: ratnadhṛk
Mantra: Om Ratnasambhava Tram

Ratnasambhava is one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

He is sometimes called the Buddha of Infinite Giving, the Buddha of Abundance, and the Buddha of Equality.

He is the embodiment of the spiritual treasure of generosity and equanimity.

He represents the boundless richness of the Dharma, the highest treasure beyond material riches, the spiritual treasure that liberates beings from poverty of both body and spirit.

He is the Buddha who bestows the priceless jewel of enlightenment to all beings.

“Ratnasambhava” is a word from Sanskrit: रत्नसम्भव, which means “Born of the Jewel” or “The Jewel-born Buddha”.

The jewel here symbolizes the inexhaustible wealth of wisdom and compassion.

He is the Buddha who transforms pride, greed, and miserliness into the wisdom of equality.

His generosity is infinite, like a rain of precious jewels that nourishes all beings.

Through his vast, unimaginable compassion, Ratnasambhava manifests in countless forms to help beings overcome poverty, both external and internal.

External poverty is lack of food, shelter, health, wealth, resources, suffering and hunger.
Internal poverty is ignorance, attachment, craving, pride, and the belief in separateness.

Ratnasambhava removes both kinds of poverty by showering beings with the Dharma's jewel-like blessings.

Scriptural References :
The first documented mention of Ratnasambhava is found in the Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra and in the Guhyasamāja Tantra (4th Century CE), and he subsequently appears in a number of Vajrayana texts.

The most elaborate account of him is to be found in the Pañcakara section of the Advayavajrasaṃgraha.

In the Śūraṅgama mantra taught in the Śūraṅgama sutra an especially influential dharani in the Chinese Chan tradition, Ratnasambhava is mentioned to be the host of the Jewel-creating Division in the South, one of the five major divisions which controls the vast demon armies of the five directions.

Ratnasambhava is also mentioned as one of the Buddhas worthy of praise in the Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Pūrvapraṇidhāna Sūtra,
chapter 9:
Again in the past, immeasurable, incalculable kalpas ago, as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges River, there appeared in the world a Buddha bearing the title of Ratnasambhava Tathāgata. Any man or woman, hearing the Buddha's name and showing respect to him, will soon attain the stage of an Arhat.

Wisdom of Equality :
His wisdom is the wisdom of equality - seeing beyond all dualities, caste, status, or identity, perceiving the fundamental sameness of all sentient beings.

Ratnasambhava's qualities are especially reflected in the Ratnakuta Sutra, the "Heap of Jewels Sutra," where the Dharma is presented as an inexhaustible jewel treasury.

Ratnasambhava transforms the delusion of pride into the wisdom of equality.
Pride creates separation: "I am higher, you are lower."
Ratnasambhava dissolves this illusion by showing the equality of all beings.

His realization is that beneath all appearances, all beings share Buddha-nature equally, like jewels hidden in stone.

Position in the Five Dhyani Buddha Mandala :
In Vajrayana texts, Ratnasambhava is part of the Five Buddha Mandala.
He presides in the South, glowing with golden light.
He represents the jewel family (Ratna-kula), associated with richness, nourishment, and stability.
His element is earth, symbolizing grounding and fertility.
His symbol is the cintamani jewel (wish-fulfilling jewel), and his wisdom is the wisdom of equality.

Iconography and Visual Depiction :
When visualized, Ratnasambhava usually appears with one serene and youthful face, golden-yellow in color, like the radiant light of the rising sun.
His body shines with the color of gold, symbolizing richness, generosity, and the preciousness of wisdom.
He is youthful, glorious, and peaceful, radiating equanimity and loving-kindness.

He often wears jeweled ornaments and a crown, emphasizing the symbolism of richness and majesty.

He is often seated on a lotus throne supported by horses, the symbol of energy, strength and activity, representing his ability to carry beings across suffering.
His throne is decorated with jewels and lotuses, symbolizing purity and abundance.

In his classic Dhyani Buddha form, Ratnasambhava's right hand is extended downward in the Varada Mudra, the gesture of supreme generosity, granting blessings, wealth, and Dharma without limit.
His left hand rests in his lap in meditative posture, holding a precious wish-fulfilling jewel (cintamani), symbolizing inexhaustible spiritual wealth.

Sometimes, he is depicted with three faces and six hands in tantric iconography, holding various jewel-related symbols, reminding practitioners that generosity is not only material but also spiritual and emotional.

In his mandala aspect, Ratnasambhava is surrounded by jewel-like lights that symbolize the treasure of Dharma.

Pure Land of Ratnasambhava :
Ratnasambhava's pure land is called Shrimat, which means "The Glorious", filled with abundance and beauty.

It is said that those who are reborn there never experience poverty, hunger, thirst or need.
Instead, the land abounds with inexhaustible jewels, food, and Dharma treasures, symbolizing Ratnasambhava's vow that no being should suffer from lack.

Ratnasambhava in the Bardo Thodol :
According to the Bardo Thödol (Tibetan Book of the Dead), Ratnasambhava appears on the second day after death.
He shines with the dazzling golden-yellow light of equality-wisdom.
If the consciousness of the deceased recognizes him in that moment, liberation is attained instantly.
But if fear or delusion causes the being to turn away, they fall back into samsara.

In the Bardo Thodol, he is depicted in union with his spiritual consort Mamaki and attended by the male bodhisattvas Ākāśagarbha and Samantabhadra (in his Bodhisattva aspect) and the female bodhisattvas Mala and Dhupa.

In Tibet, Vaiśravaṇa, also known as Jambhala and Kubera, is considered a worldly dharmapāla, and is often depicted as a member of the retinue of Ratnasambhava.

His wrathful manifestation is the Wisdom King Kuṇḍali. His another wrathful protector form is sometimes identified with Jambhala (Dzambhala), the Buddhist wealth deity, who removes poverty and obstacles, ensuring beings have the resources to practice Dharma.

Mantras :
Ratnasambhava's bija (seed syllable) is "Tram", radiating the power of transformation and generosity.

His mantras are recited to remove poverty, to increase generosity, and to dissolve pride.

One of his common mantras is:
Om Ratnasambhava Tram

Another form is:
Om Ratnasambhava Samaya Manu-pālaya

Chanting his mantra invokes his golden light of generosity and equality, dissolves pride and greed, and brings both spiritual wealth (wisdom, compassion) and material support needed for practice.

Transformation of Mental Poisons :
Each of the Five Dhyani Buddhas transforms one fundamental poison of the mind into wisdom.

Ratnasambhava transforms pride and miserliness into the wisdom of equality.
This wisdom recognizes that no being is greater or lesser than another, and that all share the same fundamental Buddha-nature.

Meditation on Ratnasambhava helps practitioners overcome pride, greed, and attachment, and cultivates equanimity, humility, and generosity.
His practice develops the qualities of giving and sharing, bringing prosperity not only in the material sense but in wisdom and compassion as well.

Ratnasaṃbhava is associated with the skandha of feeling or sensation and its relationship with consciousness.
His activity in promoting Buddhism is enriching and increasing knowledge of Dharma.

He represents the Sambhogakaya (Enjoyment Body) of the Buddha, the body of bliss that enjoys the wealth of Dharma and shares it with others.

If Vairocana is the Dharmakaya (formless truth body), Ratnasambhava is the abundance of bliss that arises when truth is realized and shared with the world.

His realization is that the ultimate jewel is the Dharma itself, and that to share this jewel freely is the highest form of generosity.

Mamaki

Ratnasambhava Buddha's divine consort is Māmaki, whose name means "She who regards all beings as her own" or "She who makes all things mine."

The name Māmaki in Sanskrit (मामकी) comes from mama
mama = "mine" + -ki (feminine suffix).

This does not mean selfish possession, but rather the wisdom of equality (samatā-jñāna), recognizing every being and phenomenon as inseparably part of oneself.

Thus, she embodies non-dual compassion and equality, complementing Ratnasambhava's all-encompassing generosity.

Māmaki is one of the Five Female Buddhas (also called the Five Prajñās or Wisdom Mothers) in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Each corresponds to one of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas; Māmaki is paired with Ratnasambhava, the Buddha of the southern direction, the jewel (Ratna) family, and the transformation of pride into equanimity.

As a Female Buddha or Prajñā Mother, Māmaki is not merely a consort but a fully enlightened being embodying a particular aspect of wisdom.

Wisdom of Equality :
She represents the wisdom of equality, complementing Ratnasambhava's boundless generosity.
While Ratnasambhava symbolizes the giving away of all attachments, Māmaki embodies the wisdom that sees all beings as equally precious and inseparable from oneself.

Māmaki represents the profound wisdom that regards all phenomena with equal vision - without bias, pride, or hierarchy.
Just as the earth supports all beings equally, she embodies the nurturing and impartial wisdom that embraces all without distinction.

Iconography and Depiction :
She is often depicted as golden-yellow or radiant like sunlight, in harmony with Ratnasambhava's jewel-like brilliance.

She may hold a water vase or jewel, symbols of abundance, fertility, purification, and the inexhaustible wealth of the Dharma.

Her posture is serene and maternal, sometimes seated on a lotus throne, adorned with jewels, silks, and a crown, radiating the dignity of the Ratna family.

Union with Ratnasambhava :
When united with Ratnasambhava, Māmaki embodies the inseparability of wisdom and generosity - the insight of equality joined with the activity of selfless giving.

Just as Ratnasambhava offers treasures without limit, Māmaki reveals the truth that all treasures are already shared, since all beings are one in equality.

Her presence reminds practitioners that spiritual pride must be transformed into humility and compassion.

While Ratnasambhava symbolizes the act of giving, Māmaki symbolizes the wisdom that all beings equally deserve compassion and generosity.

Together, they manifest the Ratna family's path of abundance, equanimity, and nobility.

Meditation and Vajrayāna Practice :
In Vajrayāna practice, practitioners visualize Ratnasambhava with Māmaki to cultivate the Wisdom of Equality (samatā-jñāna).
Meditating on them purifies pride, arrogance, and ego-clinging, transforming these poisons into humility and even-minded compassion.

Māmaki's wisdom is particularly emphasized in Ratna-family mandalas, where she is invoked for overcoming spiritual pride, fostering equanimity, and recognizing the equal Buddha-nature of all beings.

Her seed syllable (bīja mantra) is traditionally connected with mam or mām, representing universal belonging and equality.

Through mantra and visualization, the practitioner invokes her to internalize the wisdom of equanimity and the richness of Dharma.

She helps with dissolving pride, superiority, and discrimination, replacing them with the insight that all beings are equal in suffering and in potential for enlightenment.
In this way, she is both the motherly nurturer of compassion and the embodiment of non-dual wisdom.

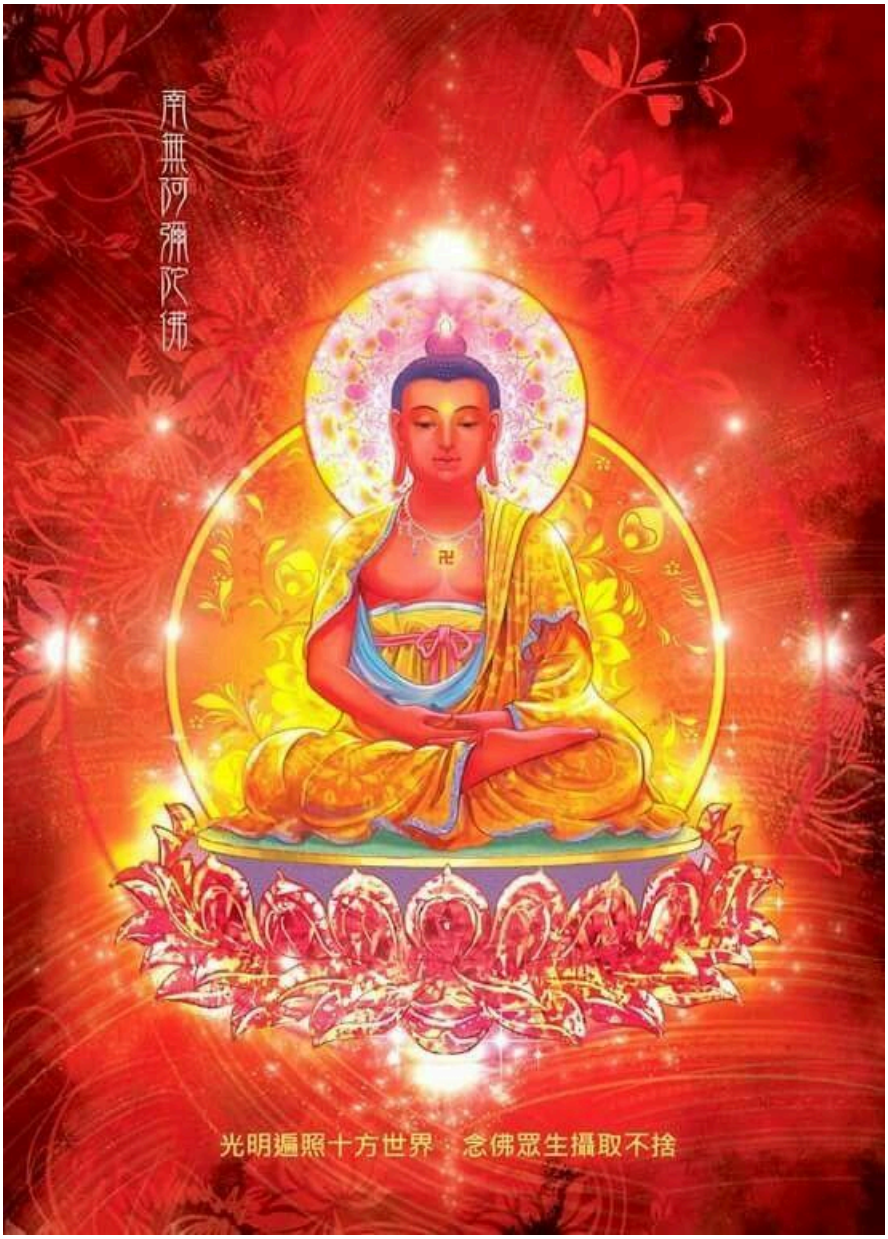
In some tantras, Māmaki is described as primordial, representing the very ground of equality upon which Ratnasambhava's generosity operates.
She is not secondary but essential to the mandala, completing the full expression of the Ratna family's wisdom and method.

The specific depictions of her form, ornaments, and mudrās vary across sādhanās and traditions, but her essence remains the same: the Wisdom Mother who embraces all beings as her own.

Mantra : Her mantra is sometimes given as:
"Om Ratna Māmaki Svāhā"
A sacred sound used in visualization and recitation to awaken the wisdom of equality.

Māmakī is also the name of Dūtī (i.e., messengers of Lord Vajrapāṇi) mentioned as attending the teachings in the 6th century Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa: one of the largest Kriyā Tantras devoted to Mañjuśrī (the Bodhisattva of wisdom) representing an encyclopedia of knowledge primarily concerned with ritualistic elements in Buddhism.
The teachings in this text originate from Mañjuśrī and were taught to and by Buddha Śākyamuni in the presence of a large audience including Māmakī.

Padma (Lotus) Family



Buddha: Amitābha
Wisdom Consort (prajña): Paṇḍāra vāsinī, also known as Sitavāsinī (wisdom of clear understanding)
Bodhisattva: Avalokiteśvara

Vidyārāja protector: Yamāntaka
Heruka form (Wrathful Forms): Hayagriva (Wrathful form of Avalokiteshvara)
Pure land: Sukhāvatī (Land of Bliss)
Symbol: Lotus (Padma)
Direction: West
Colour: Red
Element: Fire
Realm Transcended: Animal realm
Mudra: Dhyana Mudra (Meditation Mudra)
Throne: Peacock throne
Relation to the Chakras: Navel Chakra (Manipura) (Solar Plexus Chakra)
Skandhas (Aggretate): Perception (saṃjñā)
Klesha Transformed: Craving, Desire and attachment
Wisdom (jñana): Discriminating Wisdom (ability to see all things clearly)
spiritual qualities: Symbolizes love, compassion, and devotion.
specific approach to enlightenment: The Path of Compassion and Devotion.
Bījasyllable: Hrih
Buddha family mantra: ārolik
Mantra: Om Ami Dewa Hrih
Guru Padmasambhava aka guru Rinpoche belongs to the Padma Buddha Family and His personal Yidam is Hayagriva.

Amitabha is one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

He is perhaps the most widely venerated of the Five, known as the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life.

His name, Amitabha (Sanskrit: अमिताभ) means “Boundless Light” and Amitayus means “Boundless Life”, expresses his immeasurable radiance and his vow to grant beings liberation and long life in the blissful Pure Land.

As his name means Limitless Light, Amitābha's light is said to radiate throughout the cosmos and shine on all beings.

As per the name Amitāyus, this Buddha is also associated with infinite life, since his lifespan is said to be immeasurable. Amitābha's measureless life is seen as being related to his infinite compassion.

Amitayus is the youthful form of Amitabha Buddha.

The names Amitāyus and Amitābha are used interchangeably in East Asian Buddhism.

In Tibetan Buddhism however, Amitāyus is distinguished from Amitābha, and they are depicted differently in Himalayan art.

In the artistic traditions of Vajrayana Buddhism, a distinction is made between Amitāyus (Buddha of Infinite Life) and Amitābha (Buddha of Infinite Light).
These two figures are seen as identical in East Asian Buddhism and some sutras use both names interchangeably.
However, in Tibetan Buddhism, they are iconographically distinct.
Amitāyus is depicted in fine clothes, an ornate crown, and jewels.
Amitābha is depicted in simple monk's clothing (kasaya).

Amitabha represents the principle of boundless compassion and discernment.

He is the embodiment of discriminating wisdom, which transforms the poison of craving, attachment, and desire into enlightened clarity and love.

Among the Five Dhyani Buddhas, Amitabha is unique in that he gave a great series of vows to save beings, known as the Forty-Eight Vows in the Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra.

These vows culminate in his creation of the Western Pure Land of Sukhavati, a realm of bliss, free from suffering, where beings can be reborn through devotion to Amitabha's name and practice.

Amitabha is the radiant Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life, who presides over the Western Pure Land of Sukhavati.

Sukhavati: The Pure Land of Bliss :
Sukhavati, the Land of Bliss, is described as a place of jewel-trees, lotus lakes, golden ground, and celestial music.
Beings born there are free of obstacles and karmic hindrances, and they swiftly advance toward enlightenment under Amitabha's guidance.

Amitābha devotion is particularly prominent in East Asian Buddhism, where the practice of mindfulness of Amitābha Buddha (known as nianfo in Chinese, nembutsu in Japanese) is seen as a path to liberation open to everyone.

Pure Land Buddhism, based on devotion to Amitabha, became one of the most widespread and accessible traditions in East Asia, especially in China and Japan, where he is known as Amida Buddha.

Amitābha is also the principal Buddha in Pure Land Buddhism, which is a tradition focused on attaining birth in the pure land by relying on the power of Amitābha and faithfully reciting Amitabha's name.

His vow makes enlightenment possible even for ordinary beings burdened with karmic obstacles, simply through sincere faith and the recitation of his name.

Key Sutras on Amitābha :
The main texts associated with Amitabha are the Three Pure Land Sutras:
1. The Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra (Infinite Life Sutra) – describes Amitabha’s vows and the creation of his Pure Land.

2. The Smaller Sukhavativyuha Sutra (Amitabha Sutra) – praises the Pure Land and encourages recitation of Amitabha’s name.

3. The Contemplation Sutra – describes meditations on Amitabha and the Pure Land.

These sutras are the main Indian Mahayana sources for the teachings on Amitābha and his pure land.

In these sutras, Amitābha is a transcendent and immortal Buddha who resides in a pure buddhafield that he created. This pure land is located billions of worlds away in the western direction and all beings can attain rebirth there, where they can swiftly become Buddhas themselves.

These sutras emphasize that rebirth in Amitabha's Pure Land is accessible to anyone, regardless of status, merit, or ability, through faith, devotion, and calling upon Amitabha's name.

Amitabha resides in the West, the direction of the setting sun, symbolizing completion, fulfillment, and return to peace.

His Pure Land, Sukhavati, is one of the most famous Buddha-realms described in Buddhist scriptures.

According to the Sūtra of Limitless Life, eons ago, Amitābha was a bodhisattva monk named Dharmākara. In some versions of the sūtra, Dharmākara is described as a former king who, having come into contact with Buddhist teachings through the Buddha Lokeśvararāja, renounced his throne and became a monk. For five eons (kalpas), Dharmākara contemplated all the qualities of all the pure buddhafields (realms created a Buddha existing outside of ordinary reality) throughout the cosmos.

He then resolved to become a Buddha and to create the best of all pure buddha-fields possessed of many supreme qualities

The sutra then recounts how Dharmākara made a series of bodhisattva vows (praṇidhāna), pledging that unless these vows were fulfilled, he would not attain Buddhahood.
Different versions of the text list varying numbers of these vows (the most common sutra contains forty eight vows), which serves as the foundation for Pure Land doctrine.

These solemn resolutions set out the type of pure land Dharmākara aspired to create, the conditions under which beings might be born into that world, and what kind of beings they would be. After many eons of bodhisattva practice, Dharmākara became Amitābha Buddha (his enlightenment having occurred ten kalpas ago).
Since he now presides over the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī ("Utmost Bliss") in the western direction, it is understood that his vows were indeed fulfilled.

Among these "past vows", Dharmākara ensured that all beings born in his land would never fall into lower realms, and would possess golden divine bodies with many superpowers.

He also vowed that they would be firmly established on the path to Buddhahood and could enjoy profound peace, happiness and an unlimited lifespan there.

Amitābha's name would be glorified by countless Buddhas, and those who sincerely place their trust in him and wish to be reborn in his Pure Land can attain birth there.

The central aspect of these vows is the ones which discuss how to attain birth in the pure land. In Pure Land Buddhism, one of the most influential passages has been the eighteenth vow, which states:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even ten times should not be born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Excluded however, are those who commit the five grave offenses and abuse the Right Dharma.

This vow is also called the "original" or "fundamental" vow in East Asian Pure Land Buddhism, indicating its special status in this tradition.

This vow, along with some other passages, made it possible to argue that all kinds of people would attain birth

in the pure land, even very wicked, deluded and defiled persons.

Barring that one did not commit the five grave acts (patricide, matricide, the murder of an arhat, harming a Buddha, causing schism in the sangha), this scripture seems to open up the possibility of birth in the pure land to everyone who faithfully thinks of the Amitābha even just ten times.

The sūtra also explains that even those guilty of the five gravest transgressions may, just before death, encounter a virtuous teacher who instructs them in the Buddha's Dharma. If such a person sincerely calls upon Amitāyus' name ten times, their accumulated negative karma will be purified, and they will be reborn within a lotus bud in Sukhāvatī.

After twelve eons, the lotus will bloom, and the individual will behold Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, who will preach the Dharma and inspire them to cultivate bodhicitta.

This sūtra became a cornerstone of the Pure Land tradition, as it offers hope to all people.
Its emphasis on salvation through Amitābha's boundless compassion extends even to the most evil individuals.

The sutra also explains how, at the moment of death, Amitābha, will appear to those who have aspired to be born in Sukhāvatī.

Bodhisattvas who arrive in Sukhāvatī enter the state of non-retrogression (from which there is no falling back into lower states of rebirth), and the state of "one more birth," meaning they require only one additional lifetime before attaining Buddhahood.

Once in Sukhāvatī, all beings can also easily visit other pure lands to make offerings to innumerable Buddhas.

In Sukhāvatī, beings are born asexually, appearing fully formed upon lotus flowers in Amitābha’s presence.

Some lotuses remain closed, signifying individuals who still harbor doubts about Amitābha.
Such beings remain enclosed for 500 years, experiencing their lotus as a palace, yet deprived of the Buddha’s presence.

Eventually, as they dispel their doubts, they emerge from this period of purification and witness the splendor of Amitābha.

According to the sutras, those aspiring to be reborn there should cultivate bodhicitta, listen to Amitābha’s name, contemplate him, pray for rebirth in his land, and accumulate merit as a basis for their future birth.

Given these conditions, rebirth in Sukhāvatī and eventual enlightenment are significantly more accessible than striving for Buddhahood under the harsh conditions of this world, which is Amitābha Buddha's ultimate intent for creating the pure land.

This teaching about an easily accessible afterlife made Amitābha a popular Buddha in Gandhara, from where it spread Central Asia and East Asia.

Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra primarily describes the various features of Sukhāvatī and further clarifies the methods of attaining rebirth there.
It describes, for example, how the birds and trees of Sukhāvatī, themselves manifestations of Amitābha, continuously sing songs of the Dharma.
According to this sūtra, rebirth in Sukhāvatī is achieved by sincerely holding Amitābha’s name in mind with undistracted focus for one to seven days - an application of the ancient meditation known as buddhānusmṛti (recollection of the Buddha).

The Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra describes the Buddha Amitābha as having a body that radiates limitless light throughout the ten directions. The sutra states:

In the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha, Shakyamuni also describes the Buddha Amitābha's light as inconceivable and ultimately indescribable, saying that he "could never describe it completely", even if he spent eons trying.

Regarding the lifespan of Amitābha, the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra states that it is "everlasting and beyond reckoning", totally beyond any calculation or thought.

Both Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtras also proclaim Buddha Amitābha's special status, by stating that he is praised and revered by all the Buddhas of the ten quarters and that all Buddhas teach their retinues about birth in Amitābha's Pure Land.

Amitābha is also mentioned in numerous other Buddhist sources. Kenneth Tanaka notes that "Thirty one Sanskrit texts and over one hundred Chinese and Tibetan translations refer to Amitābha and Sukhavati".

The earliest Buddhist sutra mentioning Amitābha is the translation into Chinese of the Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra by the Kushan monk Lokakṣema.
This text has been dated to between the 1st century BCE and 2nd century CE by modern buddhologists and may have been translated from the Gandhari language (a fragment of which was discovered in 2018).

Some Mahāyāna treatises mention Amitābha. The Dasabhumikavibhāsā, which is traditionally ascribed to Nāgārjuna and survives only in a Chinese translation by Kumārajīva (344-413), teaches the "easy" practice of maintaining constant mindfulness of Amitābha Buddha as a way to attain birth in the pure land.

Vasubandhu (fl. 4th to 5th century CE) is traditionally credited with composing the Discourse on the Pure Land, a commentary on the Shorter Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra, which only survives in Chinese translation by the Indian translator Bodhiruci (6th century).
This work outlines a five-part practice that may have functioned as a visualization meditation.

Amitābha and his pure land are also briefly discussed by Vasubandhu's brother Asanga in his Mahāyānasaṃgraha

Other important Mahayana texts which mention Amitabha and his pure land of Sukhavati include the Ajitasena Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, the Nirvana Sutra, the Mahāmegha Sutra, and the Samādhirāja Sūtra.

There are also several Indian Dhāraṇī sutras (sutras focused on specific magical chants) which are focused on Amitābha including various editions of the Amitabha Pure Land Rebirth Dhāraṇī, as well as the Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the King of the Sound of Amitābha's Drum, the Anantamukhanirhāra-dhāraṇī and the Fundamental Dhāraṇī of Immeasurable Life Tathagata.

Symbolism and Iconography :
He embodies discriminating wisdom (pratyaveksha-jñana), the wisdom that perceives the uniqueness of each phenomenon while remaining free of craving and attachment.

His compassion embraces all beings who call upon him, especially those suffering under the burden of desire.

He is associated with the Padma (Lotus) family, which symbolizes purity, compassion, and spiritual awakening blossoming in the midst of samsara.

Amitabha is most often visualized as a serene, radiant Buddha glowing with deep red light, the color of love and compassion.
His red body represents the warmth of infinite compassion and the fire of discernment that burns away attachment.

Amitabha is usually seated in meditation posture upon a lotus throne, symbolizing purity and spiritual awakening.

His hands rest in his lap in the Dhyana Mudra, the gesture of meditation, sometimes holding a lotus or an alms bowl. In some depictions, his right hand is extended in Varada Mudra (generosity), while the left holds a vessel of nectar, symbolizing boundless life.

His seat is adorned with lotus petals, symbolizing rebirth in his Pure Land.

He is adorned simply, often without ornament, symbolizing simplicity, serenity, and the inner beauty of compassion.

Amitābha is said to display 84,000 auspicious and distinguishing marks reflecting his many virtues.
Some common marks seen in art include rays of light (vyāmaprabhā), an aureole or large halo (prabhāvalī), his urna (spiral or circle in between his eyebrows), and a

circular symbol (sometimes a swastika) on his chest (this is called Śrīvatsa).

When depicted in the standing position (upon a lotus pedestal), Amitābha is often shown with left arm bare and extended downward with thumb and forefinger touching, with the right hand facing outward also with thumb and forefinger touching.
This mudrā is called the "welcoming mudrā", and it is a gesture welcoming all beings to Amida's Pure Land.
It signifies that wisdom (symbolized by the raised hand) is accessible to even the lowest beings, while the outstretched hand shows that Amitābha's compassion is directed at the lowest beings, who cannot save themselves.

In Tantric forms, Amitabha may appear as Amitayus, holding a long-life vase filled with nectar of immortality, granting long life and vitality to practitioners.
Amitayus is a popular deity in Tibetan Buddhism, often invoked in long-life practices.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Amitāyus is also one of the three deities of long life (Amitāyus, White Tara and Uṣṇīṣavijayā).

In the Five Buddha mandala, Amitabha presides over the West, his lotus family radiating compassion, wisdom, and purity.

According to the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol), Amitabha appears on the third day after death. He radiates a brilliant red light of discriminating wisdom, accompanied by Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta (two great Bodhisattvas of compassion and strength).

If the consciousness of the deceased recognizes him and merges with his red light, liberation is attained. If not, the being turns away, attracted instead to the dull light of the human realm, leading to rebirth.

Amitabha's consort is Pandara, a wisdom Dakini who embodies purity and bliss of the lotus family. Together, they symbolize the union of wisdom and compassion.
In Pure Land tradition, Amitābha is most often depicted as part of a triad with the two bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin / Chenrezig) who is the embodiment of compassion and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Seishi) who is embodiment of wisdom and spiritual power.

These two Bodhisattvas are often depicted standing at Amitabha's sides, forming the Amitabha Trinity, widely venerated in East Asian Buddhism.

The Amitābha triad likely originated in Gandhara, and is especially common in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean art.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Mahāsthāmaprāpta is commonly replaced with Vajrapani or Padmasambhava.

Some East Asian depictions also show Amitābha with a larger group of bodhisattvas, either the eight great bodhisattvas or a host of twenty five bodhisattvas.

Descent paintings (known as "raigo" in Japanese) showing Amitabha with a host of bodhisattvas coming to lead the dying to the pure land often show twenty five bodhisattvas playing music.

Amitabh Buddha is related to the Fire element , which symbolises clarity, warmth, transformation.
And the animal related to him is Peacock, symbolizing absorbing poison and transforming it into beauty, symbol of compassion.

Mantras : Amitabha’s seed syllable is “Hrih”, the sound of universal compassion.

His mantras include:
Om Amitabha Hrih

(A short mantra invoking his light and compassion).

Famous Chinese Mantra is :
Namo Amituofo

Famous Japanese Mantra is :
Namu Amida Butsu

(The devotional name-recitation practice central to Pure Land Buddhism).

Om Amrita Teje Hara Hum
(Amitayus mantra, invoked for long life and vitality).

Another mantra of Amitabh Buddha is :
Om Ami Deva Hrih
This is an alternative form Om Amitabh Hrih.

People often recites his name as :
Namo Amitabh Buddha

Amitabha's main mantra in Shingon Buddhism is
Om amirita teizei kara um
(Japanese: オン・アミリタ・テイゼイ・カラ・ウン), which represents the underlying Sanskrit form:
oṃ amṛta-teje hara hūṃ.

Chanting Amitabha's mantra or name invokes his red light of compassion, purifies attachment, and establishes a karmic connection to rebirth in the Pure Land.

By visualizing Amitabha, reciting his name, or chanting his mantra, practitioners connect with his boundless light, ensuring both blessings in this life and rebirth in his Pure Land, where enlightenment is swift and certain.

His vow embraces all beings, offering an accessible path to liberation through devotion, compassion, and wisdom.

Each Dhyani Buddha transforms one of the five poisons into wisdom:
Through practice, Amitabha helps practitioners transform craving and desire into clarity, discernment, and deep compassion.
He transforms desire into discernment, attachment into clarity, and craving into love.

Amitabha's light never fades, and his compassion never ends. For countless beings across Asia, his name is a refuge, his Pure Land a promise, and his wisdom a guiding light toward liberation.

Hayagriva is the Heruka form of the Amitabh Buddha or Arya Avalokiteshvara.

Pandaravāsinī

Amitābha Buddha's divine consort is Pandaravāsinī, whose name means "She Who Wears White" or "The White-Clad One."

The name Pandaravāsinī in Sanskrit (पाण्डरवासिनी) comes from paṇḍara ("white, radiant, pure") and vāsinī ("she who dwells or wears"). Thus, she is the white-robed goddess of purity, embodying radiant clarity and stainless wisdom.

Role and Significance :
Pandaravāsinī is one of the Five Female Buddhas (also called the Five Prajñās or Wisdom Mothers) in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Each corresponds to one of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas; Pandaravāsinī is paired with Amitābha, the Buddha of the western direction, the Lotus family, and the transformation of craving and attachment into the Wisdom of Discriminating Awareness (pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna).

As a Female Buddha or Prajñā Mother, Pandaravāsinī is not merely a consort but a fully enlightened being, embodying the wisdom aspect of Amitābha.

Wisdom and Symbolism :
While Amitābha represents infinite light and the discriminating awareness that sees each phenomenon in its uniqueness, Pandaravāsinī represents the pure, stainless nature of that wisdom, clothed in the radiant white of clarity and compassion.

She symbolizes purity, clarity, and unconditional love, complementing Amitābha's boundless compassion.

Just as Amitābha illuminates the world with red radiance, Pandaravāsinī, in her white attire, reflects the purity of that light, making it nurturing, cooling, and liberating.

Iconography and Depiction :
She is often depicted as white-robed, luminous, serene, and compassionate, sometimes with a gentle smile, radiating maternal kindness.

She may hold a lotus flower, the emblem of the Lotus family, signifying purity born from samsara, or sometimes a vase, symbolizing the nectar of wisdom and compassion.

Seated on a red lotus throne, adorned with silks, jewels, and a diadem, she glows with radiant purity.

Union with Amitābha :
When united with Amitābha, Pandaravāsinī embodies the inseparability of compassion and wisdom, the boundless discriminating awareness of Amitābha united with the radiant purity and clarity of the Prajñā Mother.
Together, they reveal that love and wisdom are inseparable in the path of liberation.

Her presence reminds practitioners that attachment and desire, when transformed, give rise not to clinging, but to refined awareness and pure love.

Pandaravāsinī teaches that wisdom is not dry or detached, but luminous and affectionate, able to perceive the uniqueness of each being while still embracing all in compassion.

Meditation and Vajrayāna Practice :
In Vajrayāna visualization practices, practitioners unite Amitābha and Pandaravāsinī to cultivate the Wisdom of Discriminating Awareness (pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna).
This meditation purifies craving, passion, and attachment, transforming them into wisdom that sees things as they uniquely are, without grasping or aversion.

Her wisdom is especially invoked in Lotus family mandalas and sādhanās, where she is visualized for the

transformation of desire, the cultivation of compassion, and the realization of the pure discriminating wisdom of the Buddhas.

Her seed syllable (bīja mantra) is sometimes given as paṃ or paṇḍa, symbolizing purity, clarity, and white radiance.

Through recitation and visualization, practitioners internalize her blessings of purity and compassion.

She helps with overcoming lust, desire, and clinging attachments, not by suppression but by transformation - showing the practitioner how the energy of passion can become the light of wisdom.

In this way, Pandaravāsinī is both a nurturing mother of compassion and an embodiment of radiant wisdom.

Mantras : Her mantra is sometimes given as:
“Om Pandaravāsinī Paṃ Svāhā”
A sacred formula that invokes her pure presence and awakens the discriminating awareness wisdom.

Tantric Significance : In certain texts and mandalas, she is regarded as primordial, revealing that wisdom (prajñā) is inseparable from compassion and is a co-equal dimension of enlightenment.

Just as Amitābha represents infinite light, Pandaravāsinī embodies infinite purity, completing the Lotus family's mandalic perfection.

Amitābha Buddha's 48 Vows

The 48 vows made by Amitābha Buddha (formerly Bodhisattva Dharmākara) as recorded in the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra (also known as the Infinite Life Sutra).

These vows outline the conditions and qualities of his Pure Land, Sukhāvatī, and the means by which sentient beings can attain rebirth there.

1. Creation of the Pure Land:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, my land should not be made of pure gold, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

2. Uniform Appearance:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not all have a uniform golden color, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

3. No Lower Realms:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, there should be hell beings, hungry ghosts, or animals in my land, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

4. No Suffering:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, there should be suffering in my land, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

5. No Ignorance:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, there should be ignorance in my land, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

6. No Lower Realms After Rebirth:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should again be in the three lower realms after the end of their lives, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

7. Knowledge of Past Lives:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not all be aware of their past lives and know events of at least the past hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of kalpas, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

8. Divine Vision:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not attain heavenly vision and see at least hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

9. Divine Hearing:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not attain heavenly hearing and hear the teachings of at least hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Buddhas, and they should not receive and uphold all of them, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

10. Mind Reading:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not attain the wisdom of mind reading and know the minds and thoughts of sentient beings of at least hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

11. Supernatural Abilities:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not attain supernatural abilities and travel beyond at least hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within one thought, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

12. No Attachment to Body:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should give rise to perceptions, thoughts, or greed toward their bodies, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

13. No Desire for Nirvana:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not abide in meditative concentration toward enlightenment and definitely attain nirvana, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

14. Limitless Light:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light should have a limit and not illuminate at least hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

15. Limitless Lifespan:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, my lifespan should have a limit and not be at least hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of kalpas, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

16. Innumerable Arhats:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the number of sravakas in my land could be counted, even if their number is known

only after all the sentient beings of a three thousandfold world systems would become pratyekabuddhas and count together for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

17. Infinite Lifespan of Beings:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the lifespan of humans and heavenly beings in my land would be infinite, except for those who shorten their lives at will because of their original vows. If this should not be the case, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

18. No Evil Names Heard:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet humans and heavenly beings in my land would even hear the name of any unwholesomeness, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

19. Praise from Other Buddhas:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet immeasurable Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions would not all praise and proclaim my name, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

20. Rebirth Assurance:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet sentient beings of the ten directions who aspire to be reborn in my land with wholehearted faith and joy, even having just ten thoughts

[of my name], would not be reborn there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

21. Appearance of Amitābha at Death:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings of the ten directions would generate the bodhi mind, cultivate various virtues, and wholeheartedly vow to be reborn in my land. If at the end of their lives, I would not appear before them, surrounded by a great assembly, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

22. Fulfillment of Vows:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet sentient beings who hear my name, concentrate their thoughts continuously on my land, cultivate all roots of virtue, and wholeheartedly dedicate the virtue toward their aspiration to be reborn in my land would not fulfill their wishes, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

23. No Deformities:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet humans and heavenly beings in my land would not all have fully accomplished the thirty-two marks of a great man, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

24. Bodhisattvas Reaching Buddhahood:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, all the multitudes of bodhisattvas in lands of other directions who come to be reborn in my land would ultimately reach [the stage of] being only one rebirth away from Buddhahood, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

25. Ability to Travel to Other Lands:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, and bodhisattvas in my land would honor all Buddhas with offerings through the spiritual power of the Buddha, yet they could not travel throughout immeasurable, innumerable millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within the time of a meal, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

26. Manifestation of Roots of Virtue:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, and bodhisattvas in my land would manifest their roots of virtue in front of all Buddhas and honor them with offerings of their choice, yet they could not fulfill their wishes, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

27. Eloquence and Wisdom:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet bodhisattvas in my land could not teach [the Dharma] with all wisdom, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

28. Diamond-like Body:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet bodhisattvas in my land would not attain the diamond-like body of Narayana, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

29. Adornments of the Land:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans, heavenly beings, and all myriad things in my land would be adorned and pure, brilliant and beautiful, their shapes and colors would be extraordinary, and their utterly exquisite and wonderful qualities would be unfathomable and beyond description. If sentient beings, even those who have attained heavenly vision, could clearly distinguish the names and numbers of the wonders of beings and things there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

30. Perception of the Bodhi Tree:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, yet bodhisattvas in my land, even those with few measures of virtue, could not know and see the bodhi tree with its immeasurable light and colors, four million miles in height, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

31. Eloquence and Wisdom of Bodhisattvas:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to teach the Dharma with all wisdom, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

32. Travel Abilities:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to travel throughout immeasurable, innumerable millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within the time of a meal, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

33. Manifest Roots of Virtue:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to manifest their roots of virtue in front of all Buddhas and honor them with offerings of their choice, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

34. Fulfillment of Bodhisattva Wishes:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to fulfill their wishes, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

35. Teaching Dharma:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to teach the Dharma with all wisdom, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

36. Travel Powers:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to travel throughout

immeasurable, innumerable millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within the time of a meal, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

37. Manifesting Virtue:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to manifest their roots of virtue in front of all Buddhas and honor them with offerings of their choice, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

38. Wish Fulfillment:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to fulfill their wishes, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

39. Teaching Dharma:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to teach the Dharma with all wisdom, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

40. Travel Abilities:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to travel throughout immeasurable, innumerable millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within the time of a meal, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

41. Manifesting Virtue:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to manifest their roots of virtue in front of all Buddhas and honor them with offerings of their choice, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

42. Wish Fulfillment:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to fulfill their wishes, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

43. Teaching Dharma:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to teach the Dharma with all wisdom, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

44. Travel Abilities:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to travel throughout immeasurable, innumerable millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within the time of a meal, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

45. Manifesting Virtue:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to manifest their roots of virtue

in front of all Buddhas and honor them with offerings of their choice, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

46. Wish Fulfillment:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to fulfill their wishes, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

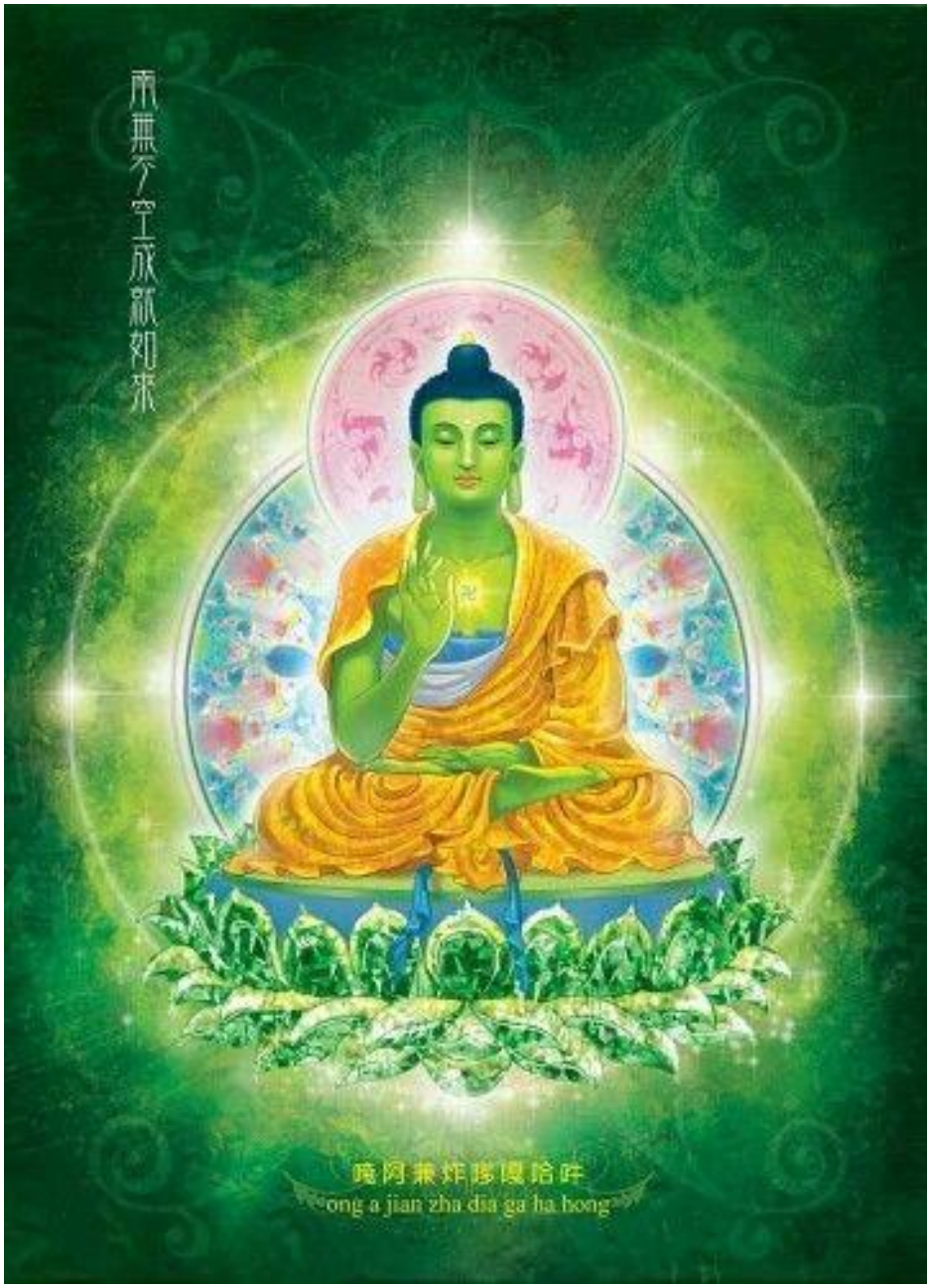
47. Teaching Dharma:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to teach the Dharma with all wisdom, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

48. Travel Abilities:
If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not have the ability to travel throughout immeasurable, innumerable millions of nayutas of Buddhas' lands within the time of a meal, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

Hayagriva Heruka

Amitabha and Amitayus

Karma Family



Buddha: Amoghasiddhi
Wisdom Consort (prajña): Tara, Samayatārā (wisdom of accomplishment)
Bodhisattva: Maitreya, or Viśvapāni

Vidyārāja protector: Vajrayakṣa
Heruka form (Wrathful Forms): Vajrakilaya (Powerful remover of obstacles)
Pure land: Karmaprasiddhi or Prakuṭā (Land of Success)
Symbol: Double Vajra (Viśvavajra)
Direction: North
Colour: Green
Element: Air, Wind
Realm Transcended: Human realm
Mudra: Abhaya Mudra (Fearlessness Mudra)
Throne: Garuda throne
Relation to the Chakras: Root Chakra (Muladhara) (Base of Spine)
Skandhas (Aggretate): Mental formations (samkhara , Saṃskāra)
Klesha Transformed: Envy and jealousy
Wisdom (jñana): Perfect practice wisdom, All-Accomplishing Wisdom (fearlessness and skillful action)
spiritual qualities: Represents activity, accomplishment, and fearlessness.
specific approach to enlightenment: The Path of Skillful Means and Action.
Bījasyllable: Ah
Buddha family mantra: prajñādhṛk
Mantra: Om Amoghasiddhi Ah

Amoghasiddhi is one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

He is sometimes called the Buddha of Infinite Accomplishment or the Buddha of Fearless Accomplishment.
He is considered the great embodiment of enlightened action and the destroyer of envy and jealousy.

“Amoghasiddhi” is a word from Sanskrit: अमोघसिद्धि, which means “Unfailing Success” or “Infallible Accomplishment”.

Amoghasiddhi Buddha represents fearless, successful activity that benefits all sentient beings.
His very name assures that his activities are never in vain, always bringing benefit to sentient beings.

Role and Symbolism :
He is the Buddha of enlightened activity, ensuring that compassion and wisdom manifest as real transformation in the lives of beings.

Where other Buddhas represent wisdom, compassion, and meditation, Amoghasiddhi is the dynamic expression of action without obstruction.

Through his boundless wisdom and compassion, Amoghasiddhi destroys envy, fear, doubt, hesitation and jealousy, transforming them into all-accomplishing wisdom. This wisdom is the enlightened quality to perform compassionate activities without hindrance that succeed in benefiting others.

Amoghasiddhi in Mandalas :
Although Amoghasiddhi appears in various sutras and tantras, his teachings are most clearly expressed through Vajrayana mandala systems, where he rules over the north direction of the Five Buddha Mandala.

In the Five Buddha Mandala, Vairocana sits at the center radiating pure wisdom, while Amoghasiddhi at the north ensures that the realization of wisdom naturally manifests as fearless and successful action.

His activity complements the wisdom of the other Dhyani Buddhas, ensuring that enlightenment manifests not only as knowledge but also as effective, compassionate action in the world.

Association with Fearlessness :
In Tibetan Buddhism, Amoghasiddhi is closely associated with the practice of fearlessness.

His blessing removes fear, doubt, jealousy, and hesitation, allowing the practitioner to act decisively for the benefit of all beings.

He embodies the fearless courage to walk the Bodhisattva path.
The blessing of Amoghasiddhi allows a practitioner to walk the Bodhisattva path with courage, free from jealousy and self-doubt.

Scriptural References and Symbols :
The Mahavairocana Sutra and other tantras of Vajrayana describe him as the Buddha who embodies the Karma family, responsible for dynamic activity.

His emblem, the double vajra (visvavajra), represents power radiating in all directions, signifying unobstructed action.

Just as Vairocana is described in the Avatamsaka Sutra as the very body of the cosmos, Amoghasiddhi is seen as the power and energy of enlightened action that pervades the cosmos.
He is the fearless flow of enlightened deeds in the universe.

Pure Land of Amoghasiddhi :
Amoghasiddhi's pure realm is called Karmaprasiddhi, "Accomplishment of Action." It is described as a world of emerald green light, filled with beings who perform enlightened deeds without failure.

Iconography and Appearance :
In iconography, Amoghasiddhi is usually shown as radiant green in color, symbolizing peaceful and active accomplishment.
His green body represents the active compassion that moves like the wind - swift, powerful, and unstoppable.

He sits upon a lotus throne supported by garudas, mythical birds that destroy snakes. The garuda symbolizes his power to overcome the poison of envy and jealousy, which are like snakes in the mind.

In his classic Dhyani Buddha form, he has one face and two hands. His right hand is raised in the Abhaya Mudra, the gesture of fearlessness, blessing beings with courage and protection.
His left hand often rests in meditative posture or holds a double vajra (visvavajra), symbolizing indestructible enlightened action.

Amoghasiddhi is also sometimes shown crowned with a five-jeweled crown and adorned with celestial ornaments and silken robes, glowing with radiant green light.
His peaceful yet firm expression shows his confidence, fearlessness, and the assurance of successful enlightened accomplishment.

In wrathful forms, Amoghasiddhi manifests as fierce protectors who carry out enlightened activity without hesitation, clearing obstacles and protecting the Dharma.

Symbolism of Fearlessness and Protection :
Amoghasiddhi symbolizes fearlessness and protection. His raised hand in the Abhaya Mudra constantly reassures beings that they are safe in the embrace of the Dharma.

His green color connects him to nature, wind, and vitality, reminding practitioners that enlightened action flows naturally like the wind - moving without resistance, reaching all beings.

Position in the Five Dhyani Buddha System :
Within the system of the Five Dhyani Buddhas, Amoghasiddhi resides in the north.
Together they represent the full spectrum of enlightened qualities, with Amoghasiddhi ensuring that the wisdom of

the other Buddhas manifests in fearless compassionate activity.

Without Amoghasiddhi, wisdom and compassion would remain inactive. With him, they manifest into action that benefits the world.

Amoghasiddhi's wisdom family is the Karma family (the family of action), associated with action and accomplishment.
His emblem is the double vajra, representing indestructible action that radiates in all directions.
His element is air (wind), symbolizing movement, dynamic activity, and unobstructed power.
His symbolic vehicle is the garuda, representing freedom from poisons and swift action.

According to the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol), Amoghasiddhi appears on the fifth day after death. He radiates a dazzling green light, the light of all-accomplishing wisdom. If the deceased recognizes this light and merges with Amoghasiddhi, liberation is attained. If not, they turn away and fall again into samsaric rebirth.

According to the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol), Amoghasiddhi appears on the fifth day after death.

He radiates a brilliant green light of all-accomplishing wisdom.
If the consciousness of the deceased recognizes this dazzling green light as the compassionate activity of the Buddha and merges with Amoghasiddhi, they are liberated instantly.
If not, they turn away out of fear and fall again into samsaric rebirth.

Mantras and Meditation Practices :
Amoghasiddhi is also associated with several important mantras.
His bija (seed syllable) is “Ah”, symbolizing accomplishment, activity, and fearlessness.

His short mantra is:
Om Amoghasiddhi Ah Hum

Another common form of his mantra is:
Om Amoghasiddhi Hum

Meditation on Amoghasiddhi and chanting his mantra removes fear, jealousy, hesitation, doubt and obstacles to action.
It empowers the practitioner to act effectively with courage, clarity and compassion in daily life.

Through his blessing, the practitioner gains courage to walk the Bodhisattva path with unwavering resolve.

In Vajrayana meditation, practitioners visualize themselves as Amoghasiddhi, radiating green light in all directions, removing jealousy and fear, blessing all beings with fearless activity.

In mandala visualization practices, Amoghasiddhi's green light radiates from the north, filling the practitioner's mind with courage, clarity, and success in beneficial activities. Meditating on him brings confidence, decisiveness, and liberation from jealousy.

Amoghasiddhi is also invoked in protective practices.
His fearless energy is said to shield practitioners from harm, obstacles, and inner doubts.

In some traditions, he is linked to the wrathful protector deities who carry out enlightened activities on behalf of the Buddhas.

Transformation of Poisons into Wisdom :
Each Dhyani Buddha transforms one human poison into wisdom.
Amoghasiddhi transforms jealousy and envy into all-accomplishing wisdom.

This wisdom is the perfect ability to act with compassion, achieving the welfare of all beings without error or obstruction.

Amoghasiddhi represents the Karmakaya, the body of enlightened action.
His realization is that enlightened actions are always spontaneous, fearless, and successful because they arise from ultimate wisdom and compassion.

Through meditation, mantra, and visualization of Amoghasiddhi Buddha, practitioners cultivate fearlessness, clarity of purpose, and success in spreading compassion and Dharma.
His blessing ensures that enlightened activities are never in vain, but always bring benefit to the world.

Amoghasiddhi Buddha is thus the fearless protector, the master of enlightened action, and the great remover of fear and jealousy.
His accomplishment is never failing, his compassion never obstructed, and his blessings are always successful.

Arya Tara

The wisdom consort of Amoghasiddhi is Ārya Tārā (Green Tārā) in many Vajrayāna systems, though in esoteric texts she is often called Tārā, the Liberator, or Samayatārā in her role as his prajñā (wisdom).

Tārā means “Savioress” or “She Who Ferries Across.”

Tara is also known as a saviouress who hears the cries of beings in samsāra and saves them from worldly and spiritual danger.

Tara is the female Buddha of enlightened activity.

She embodies all-accomplishing wisdom, ensuring enlightened actions are successful.

She represents the wisdom of perfected action (kṛty-anuṣṭhāna-jñāna), the ability to accomplish all enlightened activities without hindrance.

Union of Amoghasiddhi and Green Tārā :
Her connection to Amoghasiddhi shows the inseparability of fearless action (Amoghasiddhi) and compassionate liberating wisdom (Tārā).

Green Tārā is one of the most widely practiced deities in Vajrayāna Buddhism, and her union with Amoghasiddhi represents the ultimate guarantee that enlightened activity is never in vain.

Amoghasiddhi Buddha's function is the transformation of envy and jealousy into all-accomplishing wisdom.
His consort, Green Tārā, represents the wisdom-energy that makes enlightened action effective.

She embodies fearlessness, protection, and swift compassionate response - qualities that make action both fearless and beneficial.

Together, Amoghasiddhi and Tārā embody the enlightened union of skillful means and liberating wisdom that ensures enlightened activity brings benefit to all beings.

Amoghasiddhi’s wisdom is about the efficacy of action - doing the right thing at the right time, free from jealousy, hesitation, or fear.
His consort, Green Tārā, symbolizes the wisdom-energy that ensures these actions actually succeed in liberating beings.

She represents compassion in motion, responding instantly to the cries of beings.

Amoghasiddhi is the fearless initiator of action; Tārā is the nurturing force that carries it to completion.

Together, they represent fearless action and swift compassionate response, transforming jealousy into joyful wisdom.

Devotees visualize Amoghasiddhi in union with Green Tārā in Karma-family mandalas.

Meditating on them destroys jealousy and envy, brings fearlessness and courage in one’s actions, and awakens the ability to perform compassionate deeds effectively.

The Tara Tantra describes her as "a mother who gives birth to the buddhas of the three times" who is also "beyond samsāra and nirvāṇa."

Iconography and Symbolism of Green Tārā :
Green Tara is depicted in a vibrant green color, symbolizing the energy of growth, movement, and the air and wind element.

She appears youthful and radiant, seated gracefully on a lotus. Her posture is one of ease, with the right leg slightly extended, showing her readiness to act for the benefit of beings.

Unusually, Green Tara does not sit in meditative pose; instead her right leg extends outwards, to show us that she is ready to step forward to help us in our time of need, and does so when we invoke her.

Tara is immensely beautiful, youthful like a 16-year-old maiden.

Her expression is gentle yet powerful, embodying both swiftness in action and unshakable resolve.

She is naked from the waist up, though not in a lustful way. She is bare in that way because she remains unshackled by samsara and is free from all suffering.

Her right hand is in varada mudrā, bestowing blessings and protection, while her left hand holds a blue lotus (utpala), representing purity and compassion blossoming even amidst samsaric conditions.

Due to her enlightened compassion, Tara manifests in innumerable forms to benefit sentient beings.

These manifestations reflect the many needs of sentient beings, including protection, long life, peace, the overcoming of obstacles and saving beings from danger.

Mantras :
TAM the seed syllable (bijamantra) of Green Tara.

In some Vajrayana practices, one visualizes the seed syllable of Tara.

In the Mahasiddha Suryagupta tradition, each of the 21 forms of Maa Tara is uniquely crowned by and associated with a specific Dhyani Buddha.

In the Guhyasamāja tantra, each Buddha family is given a specific mantra.
Vairocana - Buddha family mantra: jinajik
Akṣobhya - Vajra family mantra: vajradhṛk
Ratnasambhava - Ratna family mantra: ratnadhṛk
Amitābha - Lotus family mantra: ārolik
Amoghasiddhi - Karma family mantra: prajñādhṛk

21 forms of Maa Tara

Buddhas with their Shaktis

Each Dhyani-Buddha has a female energy (śakti) who shares his color, but in a lighter shade.

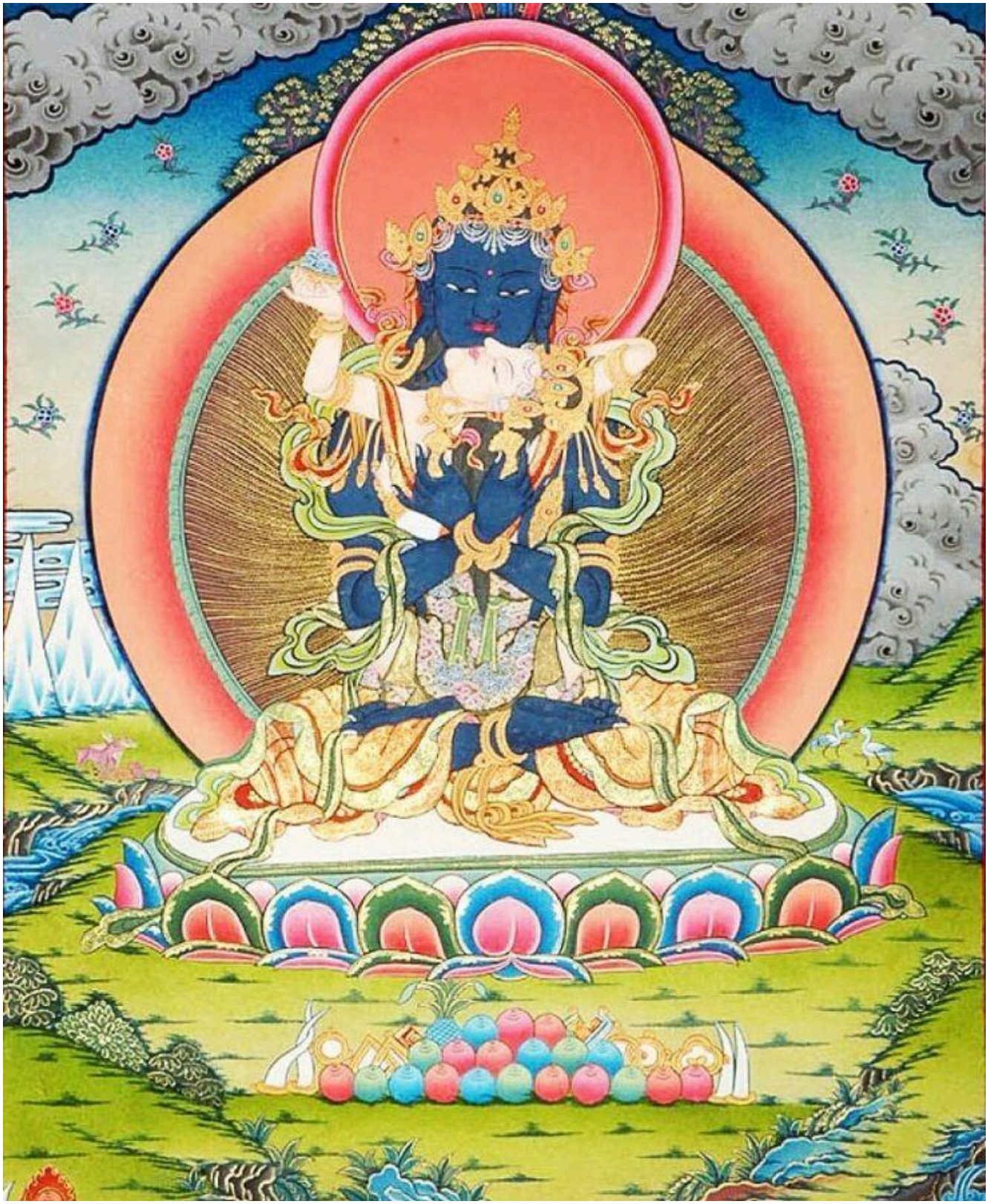
When shown with his female energy (śakti), the Dhyani-Buddha is seated in the yab-yum position and wears the clothes of an Indian prince and is adorned with Bodhisattva ornaments.

When the Dhyani-Buddhas are shown with their female energy (śakti), they always wear crowns. Because of this, Tibetans call them the "Crowned Buddhas."

Vajrasattva always wears a crown, whether he is shown alone or with his female energy.

Adi Buddha - Vajradhara

Adi Buddha Vajradhara



Adi Buddha Vajradhara in Yab Yum with consort

Adi Buddha is also called as Vajradhara (Thunderbolt-bearer).

His other names are Karmavajra, Dharmavajra.

His two arms are crossed in front of his chest in the vajra-hum-kara mudra.

His right hand holds a vajra which symbolizes skillful means and compassion while his left hand holds a bell (ghanta) which symbolizes wisdom and emptiness.

These two instruments are the representations of the “ultimate non duality” and the “non duality of existence.”

The color of Vajradhara’s body is a dark blue, which symbolizes the vastness and limitlessness of an enlightened mind, the Dharmakaya.

The Adi-Buddha is always represented as a crowned Buddha.

He wears the clothes of an Indian prince and is adorned with Bodhisattva ornaments.

His Sakti is Prajnaparamita, Adi-Dharma (Adi-Prajñā), Vajradhatu Ishvari (Queen of the Vajra Realm).

When Vajradhara holds his sakti in yab-yum position, his arms are crossed at her back, holding his usual symbols. The yum (sakti) holds a vajra and kapala (skull-cup).

In Nepal and Tibet, the Adi-Buddha is often shown with his female energy. In this form, he is called Yogāmbara, and his śakti is called Jñāneśvarī.

Vajradhara is the supreme, primordial Buddha having no beginning or end.

He is the lord of all mysteries and the master of all secrets.

It is to him the subdued and conquered evil spirits swear allegiance and vow that they will no longer prevent or hinder the propagation of the Buddhist faith.

He was called Iśvara by the Aiśvarika school and Svabhāva by the Svābhāvika school.

In the Guna Karanda Vyuha it is written : ‘ When nothing else was, Sambhu was : that is the Self-Existent (svayambhu) : and as he was before all, he is also called Adi-Buddha ’

Adi-Buddha is infinite, omniscient (all-knowing), self-existing, without a beginning or an end. It is the source of everything.

The Five Dhyani Buddhas are sometimes seen as emanations and representations of the five qualities of the Adi-Buddha or "first Buddha".

Some traditions consider the Adi-Buddha as a sixth Buddha alongside the five Dhyani Buddhas.

When all was perfect void (Maha-Sunyata) the mystic and sacred syllable **aum (Om)** became manifest, from which at his own will the Adi-Buddha was produced.

The mystic syllable **aum (Om)** represents the Tri-ratna (Three Jewels) : Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

At the creation of the world the Adi Buddha revealed himself in the form of a flame that emerged from a lotus flower.

In Nepal the Adi-Buddha is always represented by this flame symbol.

He is the one who transmits esoteric teachings to great Mahasiddhas and tantric masters.

In the Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug schools, Vajradhara is the ultimate source of all Mahamudra and Dzogchen teachings.

In the Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug schools, Vajradhara is the Adi-Buddha, the ultimate reality from which all Buddhas and teachings emerge.

In the Nyingma school, Samantabhadra is regarded as the Adi-Buddha, while Vajradhara is an emanation that reveals the tantric path.

Vajradhara is the source of the Vajrayana path, which uses tantric methods to attain enlightenment in a single lifetime.

Vajradhara is the ultimate reality personified in Vajrayana Buddhism.

Vajrasattva is a Sambhogakaya form of Vajradhara.

The mantra of Vajradhara is: **Oṁ Vajradhara Hūṁ**

Tilopa (988–1069 CE) received direct transmission from Vajradhara and passed it to Naropa.

Naropa (1016–1100 CE) systematized the teachings as the Six Yogas of Naropa, forming the foundation of Tibetan Vajrayana.

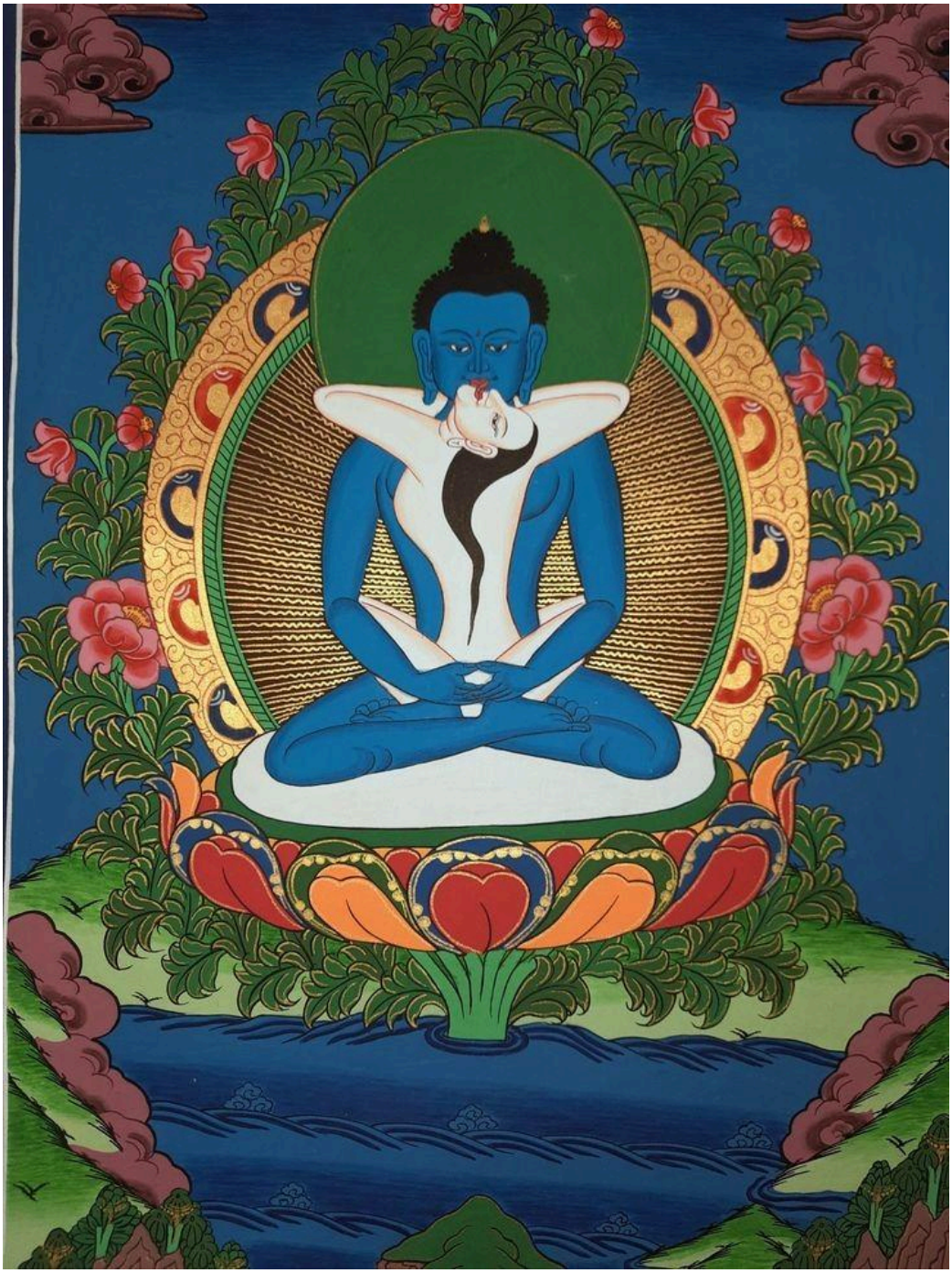
Marpa the Translator (1012–1097 CE) brought these teachings to Tibet and passed them to Milarepa, the great yogi.

Kalachakra is considered the Heruka form of the Adibuddha Vajradhara.

In some traditions, Kalachakra is also seen as an aspect of Shakyamuni Buddha in his highest tantric manifestation, as it is said that Buddha himself taught the Kalachakra Tantra at the request of King Suchandra of Shambhala.

Kalachakra with consort Vishvamata

Samantabhadra Buddha



Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri in Yab Yum

Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri are the Adi-Buddha (Primordial Buddha) and his consort in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism.

They represent the pure, original nature of mind (Dharmakaya) before conceptual thought arises.

Samantabhadra represents the natural, primordial state of awareness (rigpa).

He is the pure, beginningless awareness beyond samsara and nirvana.

He is the source of all Buddhas and all appearances.

Samantabhadra buddha and Samantabhadra bodhisattva are not the same.

Sanskrit Name: समन्तभद्र

Samantabhadra means “All-Good” or “Ever-Excellent”, While samantabhadri means “Ever-Excellent Lady”.

Samantabhadri is the female counterpart of Samantabhadra, representing the wisdom aspect of enlightenment.

In thangkas and statues, they are shown in yab-yum (union).

She is depicted as naked, white, and sitting in union with Samantabhadra in Yab Yum position.

Unlike wrathful deities, their embrace is peaceful.

The background is usually a deep blue sky, representing infinite Dharmakaya space.

His hands are usually in meditation posture, while when in union with Samantabhadri, his arms embrace her.

Their union symbolizes the ultimate realization, the inseparability of wisdom (prajñā) and method (upāya), the inseparability of emptiness and clarity, the absolute state of reality beyond subject-object duality, non-duality.

Their embrace is not physical desire but symbolizes the inseparable nature of awareness (masculine) and emptiness (feminine).

They are naked because they are beyond all conceptual fabrications.

Clothing symbolizes delusion, being unclothed signifies pure, unconditioned awareness.

Unlike other Buddhas, Samantabhadra wears no crown or jewelry, showing that he is the original, primordial state.

Unlike Buddhas like Shakyamuni or Amitabha, Samantabhadra never had a journey to enlightenment, because he was never deluded in the first place.

Samantabhadra’s dark blue body represents the infinite, boundless expanse of Dharmakaya, like the vast sky.

This is the highest Dzogchen (Great Perfection) realization, the highest practice in the Nyingma tradition

Dzogchen texts say that all beings are already Buddhas, but they must recognize their true nature.

It teaches that enlightenment is already present, we do not "achieve" it, we recognize it.

The goal is to see everything as already enlightened.

Unlike other Vajrayana practices, Dzogchen does not involve complex rituals; it focuses only on direct recognition.

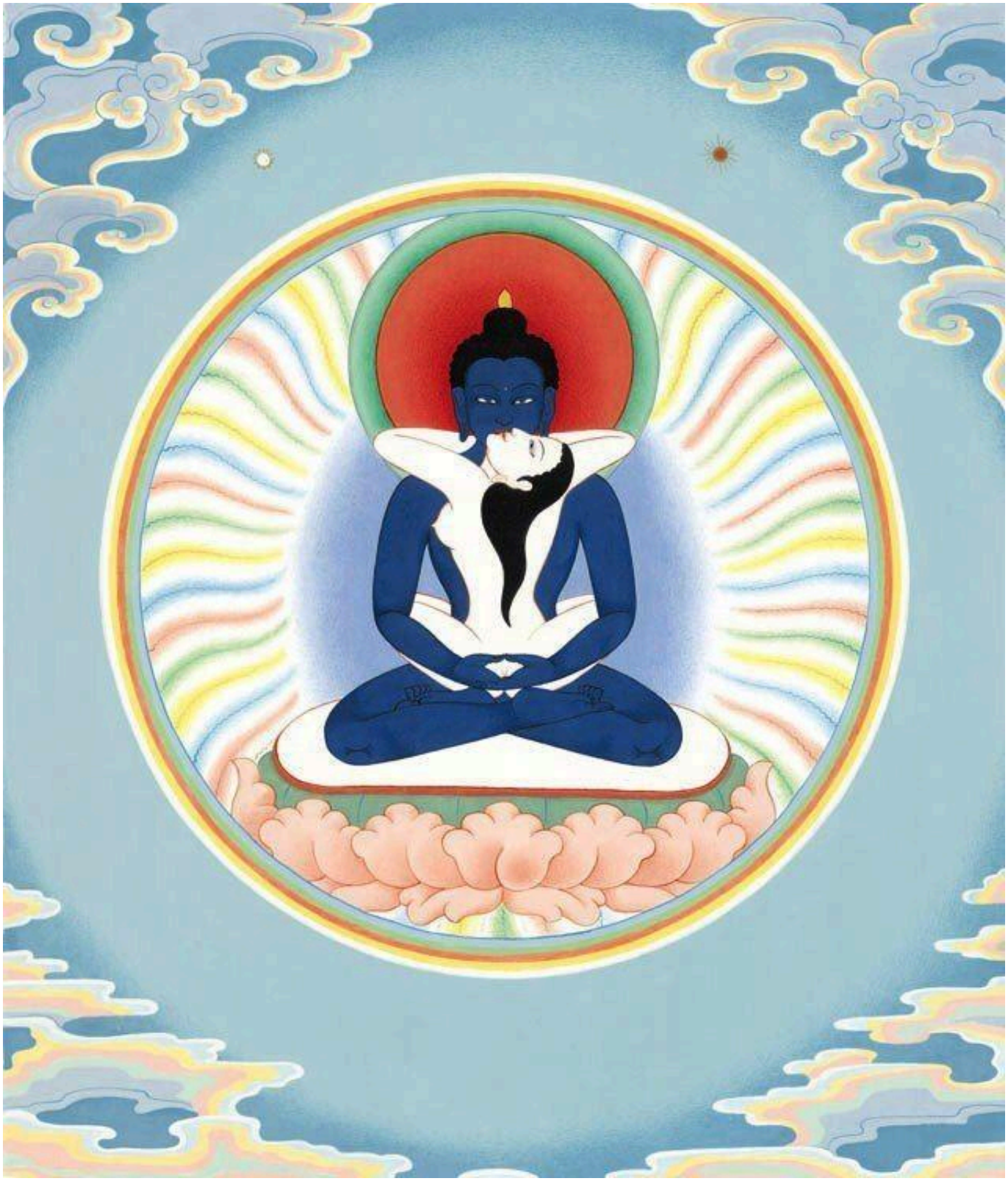
Samantabhadra and Vajradhara both are Primordial Buddhas, Vajradhara is more associated with Tantra, whereas Samantabhadra is central to Dzogchen teachings.

This mantra of Samantabhadra is not commonly recited in mainstream practice, but some traditions recite:

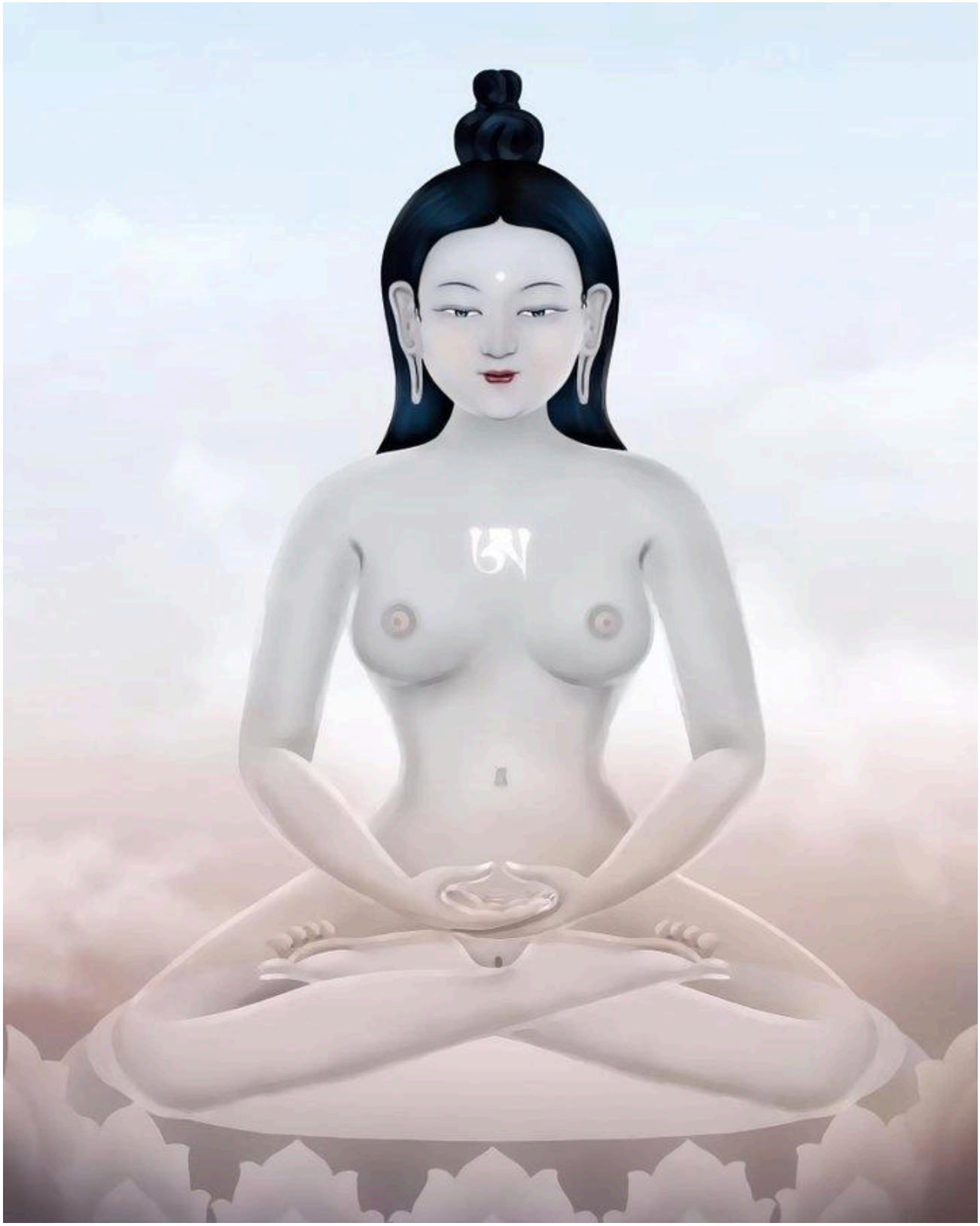
Oṁ āḥ hūṁ Samantabhadra sarva dharmā svabhāva jñāna vajra svabhāvāya svāhā

Oṁ, āḥ, hūṁ, Samantabhadra, all phenomena's nature is wisdom, vajra nature, so be it.

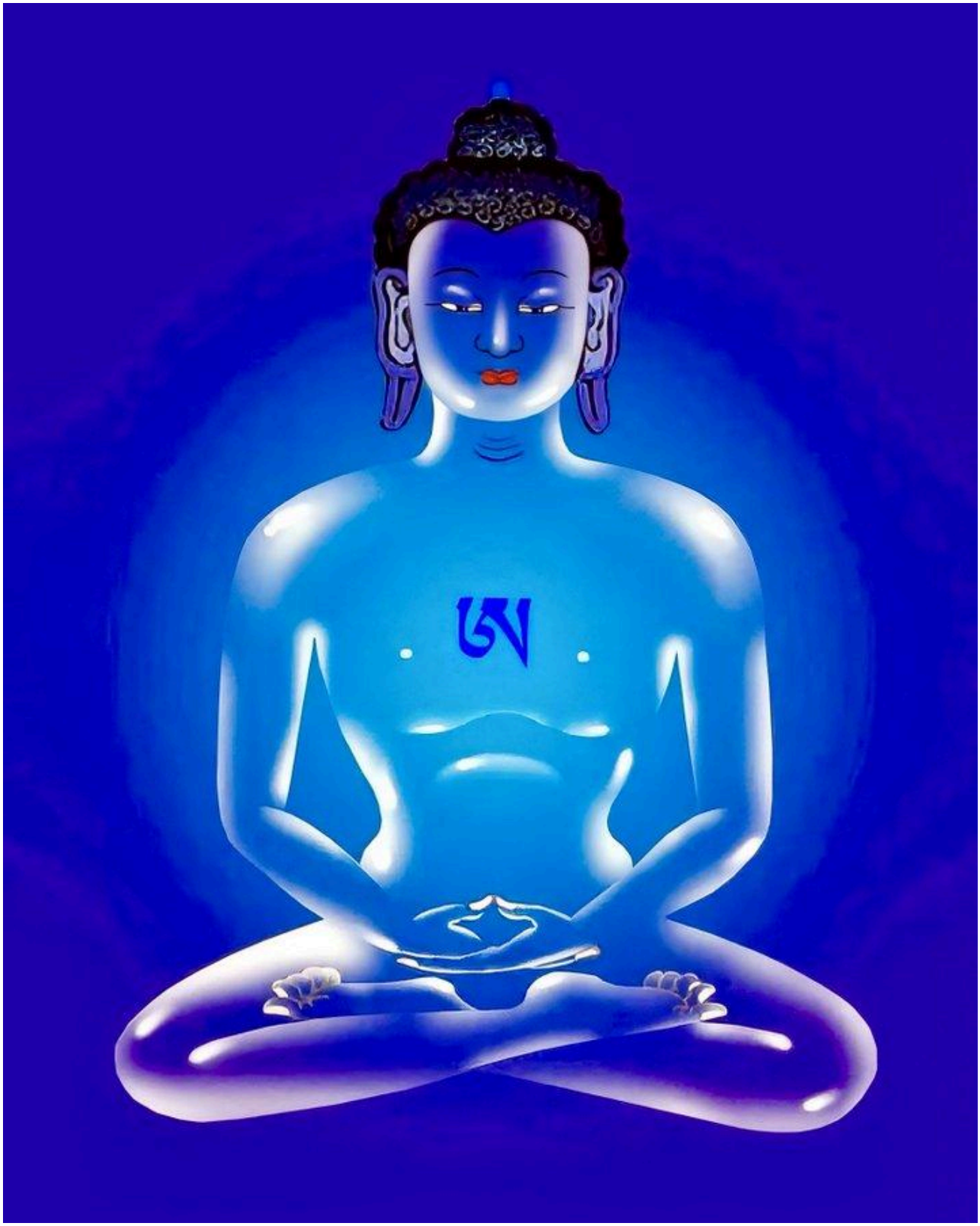
Chemchok Heruka (Sanskrit: Mahottara Heruka) is the wrathful aspect (Heruka) of Samantabhadra, representing the pure awareness of the Dharmakaya.



Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri



Samantabhadri



Samantabhadra

Chemchok Heruka - Mahottara Heruka

Bhaisajyaguru The Medicine Buddha

Bhaisajyaguru The Medicine Buddha

Bhaiṣajyaguru (भैषज्यगुरु) is commonly known as the Medicine Buddha or The Buddha of Healing.

He is a highly revered Buddha in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

He is associated with healing, medicine, and the alleviation of suffering, both physical and mental.

Bhaiṣajyaguru embodies clarity of mind, purity of the body, and the vastness of healing energy.

Bhaiṣajyaguru embodies the ultimate compassion of healing.

His full name in Sanskrit is Bhaiṣajyaguru Vaidūryaprabha, which means "Master of Healing, Lapis Lazuli Light."

He is also known by the name Lapis Lazuli Medicine Buddha.

Bhaiṣajyaguru is often shown with deep blue skin, like the color of the gemstone lapis lazuli.

Lapis lazuli is a deep blue precious gemstone historically associated with healing, purification and wisdom.

Bhaisajyaguru's deep blue radiance symbolizes the power to heal physical, mental, and spiritual sicknesses.

His right hand is in the Varada Mudra (gesture of giving and compassion), sometimes holding a myrobalan (āmalaka) fruit, a medicinal plant believed to have healing properties.

His left hand is in the Dhyana Mudra (meditation gesture), often holding a lapis lazuli alms bowl filled with medicinal nectar.

The Bhaiṣajyaguru Vaidūryaprabha Rāja Sūtra is an important Buddhist text describing the vows, powers, and benefits of invoking Bhaiṣajyaguru.

The Twelve Great Vows of Bhaiṣajyaguru:
According to the Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra, Bhaiṣajyaguru made twelve great vows to benefit all sentient beings:

1. To illuminate the world with his radiant lapis lazuli light and dispel ignorance.

2. To bring all beings to a state of complete physical and spiritual perfection.

3. To provide all beings with unlimited resources, so they never suffer from poverty.

4. To guide those who have gone astray onto the right path of Dharma.

5. To help beings follow the Bodhisattva path and live in harmony.

6. To heal those afflicted with physical and mental illnesses through his divine medicine.

7. To help the sick and disabled regain their health and mobility.

8. To relieve the suffering of those trapped in unfortunate circumstances, such as poverty or oppression.

9. To inspire beings to live with moral discipline and avoid harmful actions.

10. To help prisoners and those who have fallen into darkness find redemption.

11. To ensure women who wish to be reborn as men can fulfill their spiritual aspirations.

12. To help beings attain final liberation and enlightenment, freeing them from the cycle of birth and death.

These vows show his deep commitment to healing, compassion, and enlightenment for all beings.

In China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, the Medicine Buddha is highly venerated as a source of healing and protection from illness.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Bhaiṣajyaguru is often depicted with seven other Medicine Buddhas, including Shakyamuni Buddha, forming the Eight Medicine Buddhas.

The Eight Medicine Buddhas:
1. **Bhaiṣajyaguru** (Lapis Lazuli Medicine Buddha) – Supreme healing and spiritual purification.

2. **Shakyamuni Buddha** – The historical Buddha, guiding beings to enlightenment.

3. **Suparikīrtita-Nāmaśrī** (Well-Famed Name) – Removes karmic obstacles.

4. **Suvarṇabhadra-Vimalā** (Golden Radiance and Purity) – Grants wisdom and insight.

5. **Aśokottamaśrī** (Supreme Joy and Glory) – Eliminates sorrow and misfortune.

6. **Dharmakīrti-Sāgara** (Ocean of Dharma) – Increases spiritual wisdom.

7. **Abhijña-Rāja** (King of Higher Knowledge) – Enhances meditative powers.

8. **Ratnakīrti-Rāja** (King of Precious Wisdom) – Bestows wealth and spiritual prosperity.

Each of these Buddhas represents a different aspect of healing and enlightenment.

These Buddhas are invoked together for healing and longevity.

Bhaiṣajyaguru is sometimes considered an emanation of Shakyamuni Buddha in a healing form.

Chanting the Bhaiṣajyaguru mantra or sutra recitation is believed to bring healing, longevity, protection from diseases and prevent disasters.

His practice is included in tantric rituals.

Bhaiṣajyaguru resides in the eastern pure land, called Vaidūryanirbhāsa (Lapis Lazuli Pure Land).

It is a realm of perfect health, wisdom, and radiance, free from disease and suffering.

It is believe that sincere practice of Bhaiṣajyaguru can lead to rebirth in this Pure Land.

Bhaiṣajyaguru's mantra and rituals are commonly practiced by Buddhist monks, healers, and lay practitioners.

Tibetan Buddhist lamas give Medicine Buddha empowerments (abhisheka) to qualified disciples.

The empowerment enables practitioners to meditate on Bhaiṣajyaguru and perform healing practices.

Practitioners visualize a radiant blue Bhaiṣajyaguru sending healing light to all beings.

This meditation is believed to purify illnesses, emotional disturbances, and negative karma.

The Medicine Buddha's mantra is widely chanted for healing:

Sanskrit Mantra:

Tadyathā oṃ bhaiṣajye bhaiṣajye mahābhaiṣajye bhaiṣajye rāja samudgate svāhā

Tibetan Mantra:

Tayata Om Bekandze Bekandze Maha Bekandze Radza Samudgate Soha

Meaning of Mantra:

May all suffering, illness, and pain be eliminated. May the supreme healing energy of Bhaiṣajyaguru bring well-being and enlightenment.

Many hospitals and medical centers, especially in Asian Buddhist countries, have statues or images of Bhaiṣajyaguru for blessings.

Benefits of Bhaiṣajyaguru Practice:

- Healing of physical and mental illnesses
- Protection from diseases, accidents, and misfortunes
- Purification of negative karma
- Promotion of longevity and well-being
- Guidance in difficult times
- Blessings for successful medical treatments

The Eight Medicine Buddhas including Shakyamuni Buddha

Bhaisajyaguru The Medicine Buddha with dakinis

Pacceka Buddha
Pratyekabuddha

Pacceka Buddha (Pali) or Pratyekabuddha (Sanskrit) means "Solitary Buddha" or "Individually Enlightened One.”

A Pacceka Buddha attains enlightenment (nirvāṇa) without the guidance of a teacher but does not teach the Dharma to others as a Sammasambuddha (fully enlightened Buddha) does.

A Pacceka Buddha achieves enlightenment independently through personal insight into the Four Noble Truths.

Their wisdom (paññā) is considered profound.

Their realization of dependent origination (paṭicca-samuppāda) is deep, leading them to abandon attachment and desires.

They attains enlightenment through direct realization and through their own effort without the need for a teacher or external scriptures.

Their enlightenment arises from deep contemplation on the nature of existence, impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anattā).

Unlike Sammasambuddhas, they do not need to fulfill the ten perfections (pāramitā) over countless lifetimes.

To Becoming a Pacceka Buddha requires many lifetimes of cultivating paññā (wisdom) and viriya (effort) without taking a Bodhisattva vow.

They have previously practiced generosity, morality, and meditation over countless lifetimes.

They does not establish a community (Sangha).

They does not teach the path to liberation in a structured way.

They Prefers solitude and remains detached from worldly affairs.

Pacceka Buddhas appear in times when there is no living Buddha or no preserved Buddhist teachings (Dhamma).

Sammasambuddhas are born to rediscover and share the Dhamma with others, but Pacceka Buddhas attain

enlightenment only for themselves and do not establish a tradition.

Multiple Pacceka Buddhas can exist at the same time.

They prefer to live in forests, mountains, or remote areas.

They live a simple life, practicing deep meditation and insight.

They mostly stay alone and rarely appear in society.

They wear simple robes and eat only what is necessary for survival.

They do not actively teach, but their presence is considered an inspiration.

If they do teach, their words are short, indirect, or symbolic rather than detailed explanations.

They sometimes teach indirectly through actions, silence, or short statements.

The Theravāda tradition, especially in the Khuddaka Nikāya and Apadāna, mentions Pacceka Buddhas.

The Itivuttaka states that Pacceka Buddhas arise in times when the Buddha's teaching is lost.

In the Jātaka tales, past lives of Pacceka Buddhas are mentioned.

The Pacceka Buddha Vagga in the Apadāna mentions 500 Pacceka Buddhas living together on Mount Gandhamādana.

They are respected but not worshipped like a Sammasambuddha.

They are considered highly enlightened beings, but their impact on Buddhism is limited since they do not spread the Dhamma.

They remind practitioners that enlightenment is possible even without a teacher.

28 Buddhas

The Buddhavaṁsa (बुद्धवंश) is a text that provides information about the Buddhas who appeared before Gautama Buddha.

It is a part of the Khuddaka Nikāya, which belongs to the Sutta Piṭaka in Buddhist Tripitaka.

The 28 Buddhas with their Pali and Sanskrit names:

1. Taṇhaṅkara Buddha - तन्हंकर बुध - त्रिष्णंकर बुद्ध
2. Medhaṅkara Buddha - मेधांकर बुध - मेधान्कर बुद्ध
3. Saraṇaṅkara Buddha - सरणंकर बुध - शरणंकर बुद्ध
4. Dīpaṅkara Buddha - दीपांकर बुध - दीपांकर बुद्ध
5. Koṇḍañña Buddha - कोंडन्य बुध - कौण्डिन्य बुद्ध
6. Maṅgala Buddha - मंगल बुध - मंगल बुद्ध
7. Sumana Buddha - सुमन बुध - सुमन बुद्ध
8. Revata Buddha - रेवत बुध - रेवतबुद्ध
9. Sobhita Buddha - सोभित बुध - शोभित बुद्ध
10. Anomadassī Buddha - अनोमदस्सी बुध - अनोमदर्शी बुद्ध
11. Paduma Buddha - पदुम बुध - पद्म बुद्ध
12. Nārada Buddha - नारद बुध - नारद बुद्ध
13. Padumuttara Buddha - पद्मोत्तर बुध - पद्मोत्तर बुद्ध
14. Sumedha Buddha - सुमेध बुध - सुमेध बुद्ध
15. Sujāta Buddha - सुजात बुध - सुजात बुद्ध
16. Piyadassī Buddha - पियादस्सी बुध - प्रियदर्शी बुद्ध

17. Atthadassī Buddha - अत्थदस्सी बुध - अर्थदर्शी बुद्ध
18. Dhammadassī Buddha - धम्मदस्सी बुध - धर्मदर्शी बुद्ध
19. Siddhattha Buddha - सिद्धत्थ बुध - सिद्धार्थ बुद्ध
20. Tissa Buddha - तिस्स बुध - तिष्य बुद्ध
21. Phussa Buddha - फुस्स बुध - पुण्य बुद्ध
22. Vipassī Buddha - विपस्सी बुध - विपश्वी बुद्ध
23. Sikhī Buddha - सिखी बुध - शिखी बुद्ध
24. Vessabhū Buddha - वेस्सभू बुध - विश्वभू बुद्ध
25. Kakusandha Buddha - ककुसंध बुध - क्राकुचंद बुद्ध
26. Koṇāgamana Buddha - कोणागमन बुध - कनकमुनि बुद्ध
27. Kassapa Buddha - कस्सप बुध - कश्यप बुद्ध
28. Gotama Buddha - गोतम बुध - गौतम बुद्ध

Dīpaṅkara Buddha is famous for predicting that Sumedha Tapasa (a past life of Gautama Buddha) would become a Buddha in the future.

More than one Sammasambuddha cannot exist at the same time.

Sammasambuddhas appear in an era when no dharma exists.

Sammasambuddhas are born to rediscover and share the Dhamma with others.

A Sammasambuddha is a "Fully Enlightened Buddha" who attains enlightenment through his own efforts.

After achieving enlightenment, a Sammasambuddha teaches others the path to enlightenment (Dharma) and establishes the Buddhist community (Sangha).

They offer a detailed and comprehensive explanation of the path to enlightenment and help others to follow it.

A Sammasambuddha follows the Bodhisattva path, a long journey where they practice the Ten Perfections (pāramitā).

A Sammasambuddha achieves enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.

Sapta Buddhas
Seven Buddhas

Sapta Buddhas सप्त बुद्ध ***at Ajanta Caves***

The Sapta Buddhas refers to the six Buddhas who appeared before Gautama Buddha in past kalpas (cosmic ages), plus Gautama Buddha himself.

Gautama Buddha reaffirmed their wisdom and continued their legacy.

The Dīgha Nikāya (DN 14 - Mahāpadāna Sutta) and Buddhavaṁsa (Khuddaka Nikāya) in the Theravāda tradition provide details about Sapta Buddhas.

Other Mahayana and Vajrayan Buddhist texts also mention them.

They are considered historical Buddhas in Buddhist tradition.

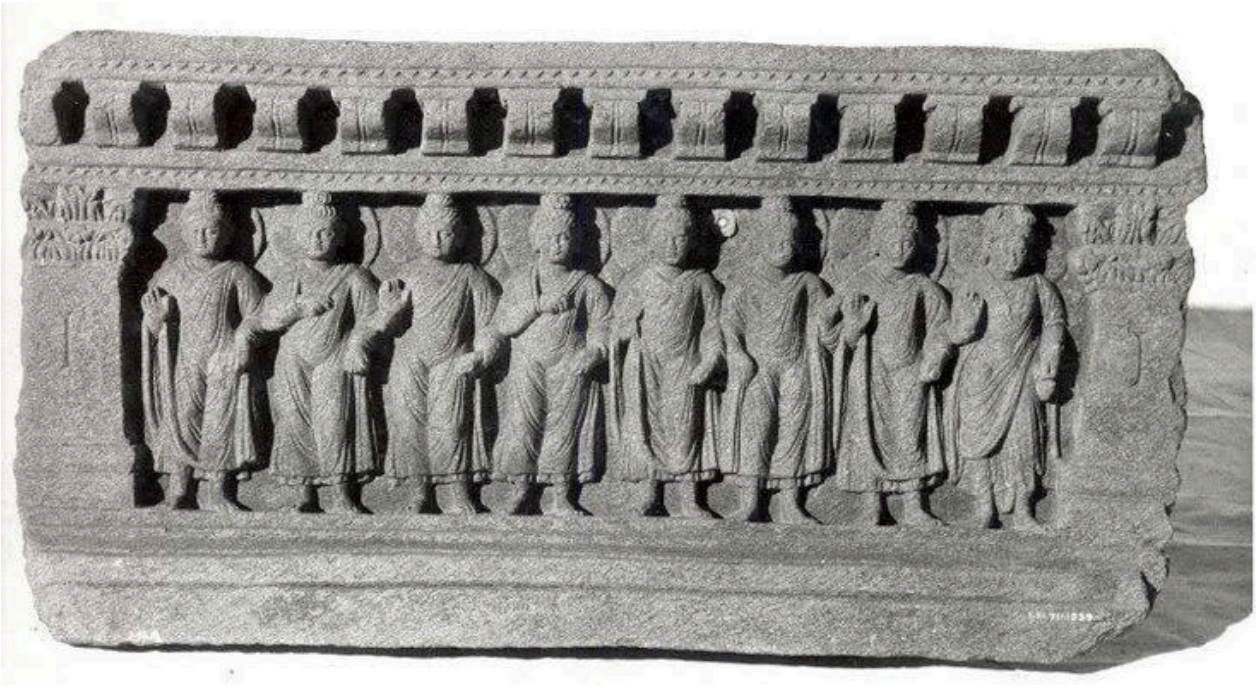
The Seven Buddhas:

1. Vipassī Buddha (lived 91 kalpas ago)
2. Sikhī Buddha (lived 31 kalpas ago)
3. Vessabhū Buddha (lived 31 kalpas ago)
4. Kakusandha Buddha (first Buddha of the current Bhaddakappa)
5. Koṇāgamana Buddha (second Buddha of this kalpa)
6. Kassapa Buddha (third Buddha of this kalpa)
7. Gautama Buddha (fourth and present Buddha of this kalpa)

Bodhi Trees of the Seven Buddhas:
Vipassī – Pāṭali (Trumpet Flower Tree)
Sikhī – Puṇḍarīka (White Lotus Tree)
Vessabhū – Sāla (Shorea Robusta Tree)
Kakusandha – Sirīsa (Albizia Lebbeck Tree)
Koṇāgamana – Udumbara (Ficus Racemosa Tree)
Kassapa – Nigrodha (Banyan Tree)
Gautama – Assattha (Peepal Tree/Ficus Religiosa)

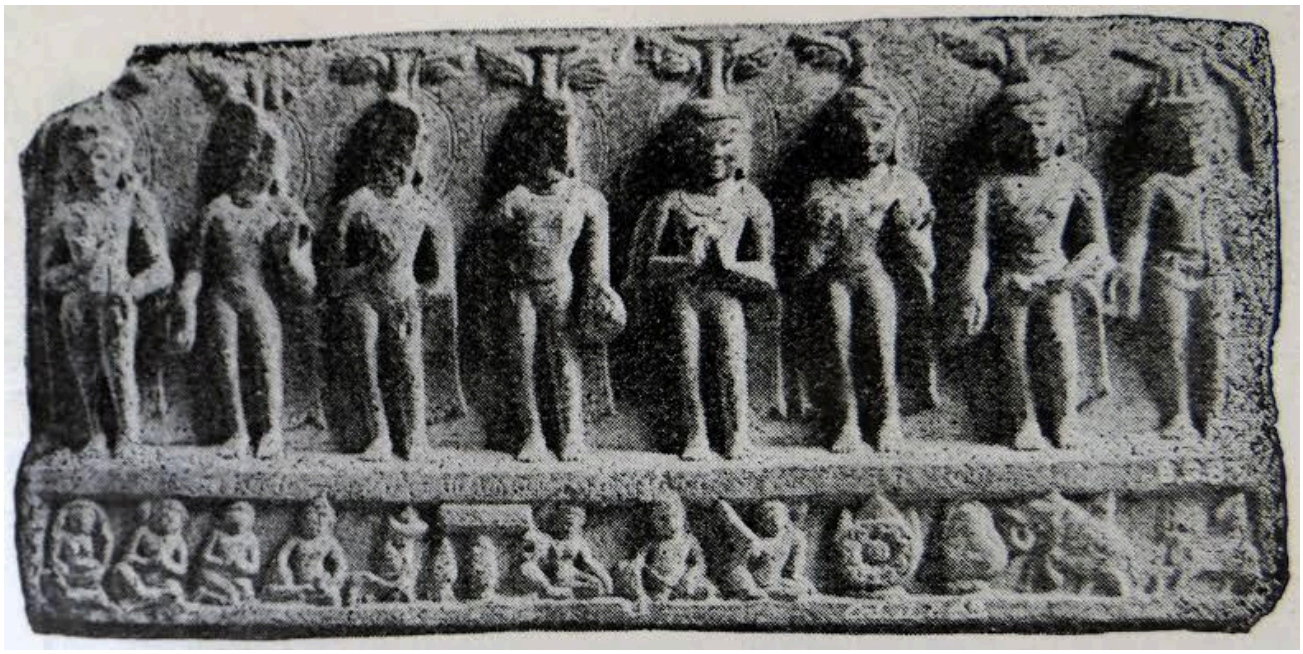
In Buddhist art, Sapta Buddha are often depicted standing in a row or seated together.

They can also be seen in paintings, stone carvings, and Thangka art.



Seven Buddhas with Maitreya

Seven Buddhas with Maitreya



Seven Buddhas with Maitreya

Seven Buddhas

Seven Buddhas

Maitreya The Future Buddha

Maitreya The Future Buddha

Maitreya (Sanskrit: मैत्रेय, Pali: Metteyya) is the prophesied future Buddha.

He is believed to be the next Buddha who will appear in the world after Gautama Buddha.

Maitreya means "Loving-Kindness" or "Friendliness," derived from Maitrī (Metta in Pali).

He is a Bodhisattva currently residing in the Tusita Heaven, awaiting the right time to descend into the human realm.

According to Buddhist cosmology, Bodhisattvas reside in Tusita Devaloka before their final birth.

Maitreya teaches the Dharma to celestial beings and is waiting for his turn to appear in the human realm.

He is mentioned in Buddhist texts such as the Digha Nikaya, Anagatavamsa, Lalitavistara Sutra, and Mahayana Sutras.

The Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta (Digha Nikaya 26) describes his coming in detail.

Mahayana texts like the Maitreyavyakarana and Lotus Sutra discuss his future Buddhahood.

Physical characteristics described as having the 32 major and 80 minor marks of a great being (Mahapurusha Lakshanas).

He is often depicted seated on a throne or chair.

Sometimes shown with a water flask (symbolizing abundance and prosperity) and a stupa on his crown (symbolizing his deep connection with past Buddhas).

He is depicted with hands in the "Dharmachakra Mudra" (gesture of teaching).

Maitreya will come when the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni have almost disappeared.

He will appear at a time when the Dharma is almost forgotten.

The world will have fallen into deep moral and social decline.

Society will be filled with greed, violence, and ignorance.

Human lifespan will first become very short, but later it will start increasing again.

human lifespan and morality will start improving before his birth.

He will be born in a Brahmin family and renounce the world.

He will attain full enlightenment under a Naga Pushpa (Serpent Flower) tree.

Maitreya Buddha will turn the wheel of Dharma.

He will teach the Seven Treasures of Enlightenment and Ten Perfections (Paramitas).

His teachings will be based on loving-kindness, moral discipline, and wisdom.

His Dharma will be pure and will bring a new golden age of Buddhism.

He will restore the Dharma and establish a new order of monks and nuns.

His Sangha will be pure and will last for thousands of years.

He will lead many beings to Nirvana and guide many beings to enlightenment.

His teachings will bring peace and happiness, marking the start of a new golden age.

Many Buddhists pray to Maitreya for blessings and rebirth in his time to receive his teachings.

Until his arrival, Buddhists strive to follow the teachings of the present Buddha, Shakyamuni.

Gautama Buddha taught in an era of declining spirituality; Maitreya will teach in a renewed golden age.

Gautama's Dharma was about liberation through suffering; Maitreya's Dharma will emphasize joy and prosperity.

In Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, he is associated with the Laughing Buddha (Budai), a symbol of happiness and future prosperity.

In Central Asian and Gandhara Art, Ancient statues depict him as a Bodhisattva in royal robes.

Boddhisatva Maitreya

Maitreya Buddha ladakh

Maitreya Buddha

Maitreya Buddha

Arahant

The term Arahant (Pali अरहंत्) or Arhat (Sanskrit अर्हत्) means "worthy one" or "one who is free from defilements”

It refers to a person who has attained Nirvana (liberation) by completely eradicating all defilements.

The meaning of Arhat is ari-hanta, means "one who has destroyed the foes of afflictions".

Arahant achieves enlightenment through the teachings of the Buddha.

An Arahant is considered the highest spiritual attainment in Theravāda Buddhism.

Theravāda Buddhism sees Arahantship as the ultimate goal.

In Mahayana Buddhism, Arahants are respected but considered to have attained only individual liberation, whereas Bodhisattvas work for the liberation of all beings.

Mahayana Buddhism often emphasizes the Bodhisattva ideal over Arahantship, considering it a more compassionate path for the benefit of all beings.

Mahayana texts, like the Lotus Sutra, suggest that Arahants will eventually follow the Bodhisattva path.

The Sarvāstivāda, Kāśyapīya, Mahāsāṃghika, Ekavyāvahārika, Lokottaravāda, Bahuśrutīya, Prajñaptivāda and Caitika schools all regarded Arhats as being imperfect in their attainments compared to buddhas.

Mahayana Buddhism regarded a group of Eighteen Arhats as awaiting the return of the Buddha as Maitreya,

The Shakyamuni Buddha himself was also an Arahant, but he is distinguished as a Sammāsambuddha (Perfectly Enlightened One).

An Arahant has uprooted all mental impurities, Like Greed (Raga), Hatred (Dosa), and Delusion (Moha).

The Four Stages of Enlightenment
Arahantship is the final stage of enlightenment.
1. Sotāpanna (Stream-enterer) – Has eradicated belief in self, doubt, and clinging to rituals.

2. Sakadāgāmī (Once-returner) – Has significantly weakened sensual desire and ill-will.

3. Anāgāmī (Non-returner) – Has completely abandoned sensual craving and aversion.

4. Arahant – Has eradicated all defilements and attained complete liberation.

After Becoming an Arahant, they continue living until their natural lifespan ends.

An Arahant lives a completely ethical and virtuous life.

They teach and guide others but without attachment or ego.

Their teachings help guide monks, nuns, and lay followers.

They serve as living examples of enlightenment.

After death, an Arahant attains Parinibbana, achieving complete liberation and the end of rebirth and Samsara.

Sāriputta, Mahā Moggallāna, Mahākassapa, Ananda and Angulimāla are some of the notable Arahants in Buddhism.

Prajñāpāramitā Devī

Prajnaparamita Devi

Prajñāpāramitā Devī is one of the deepest and most profound figures in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Prajñāpāramitā Devī, often called the Mother of All Buddhas, is a female personification of transcendental wisdom in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The word Prajñāpāramitā means the “Perfection of Wisdom”, referring both to the sacred texts that explain the ultimate truth and to the goddess herself as the embodiment of that wisdom.

In Mahāyāna tradition, all Buddhas of the past, present, and future are said to be “born” from her, because without wisdom (prajñā), enlightenment is impossible.

She is revered not only as a philosophical principle but also as a compassionate motherly figure who guides beings toward liberation.

Meaning of the Name Prajñāpāramitā :
Prajñā (प्रज्ञा) means wisdom, higher understanding, the knowledge that penetrates reality.

Pāramitā (पारमिता) means perfection, completeness, the highest virtue that goes beyond ordinary limitations.

Together, Prajñāpāramitā (प्रज्ञापारमिता) means the Perfection of Wisdom, the wisdom that realizes śūnyatā (emptiness), the truth that all things are empty of permanent self-nature.

She is called a Devi (goddess) because Buddhists personified this perfection as a divine feminine principle, symbolizing her nurturing and creative role.

Origins and Historical Development :
The concept of Prajñāpāramitā first appeared in Mahayana sutras around the 1st century BCE. These texts, called the Prajñāpāramitā Sutras, range from short works like the Heart Sutra and Diamond Sutra, to extremely long versions like the 100,000-verse Prajñāpāramitā Sutra.

Over time, practitioners began to worship this wisdom in the form of a goddess.

By the 4th–5th centuries CE, she was visualized as a divine female figure, honored in both texts and rituals.

In India, she was especially popular during the Pāla dynasty (8th–12th century CE), and later her worship spread to Nepal, Tibet, China, and Southeast Asia.

Philosophical Meaning of Prajñāpāramitā :
Prajñāpāramitā represents the deep understanding of reality. Her wisdom is not ordinary knowledge but the realization of:
Śūnyatā (emptiness): All things lack a permanent, independent essence.

Pratītyasamutpāda (dependent origination): Everything arises due to causes and conditions.

Non-duality: No separation between subject and object, self and other.

Because all Buddhas attain enlightenment through realizing emptiness, Prajñāpāramitā is called their "Mother." Just as a mother gives birth to a child, wisdom gives birth to Buddhahood.

Iconography Depictions :
In Buddhist art, Prajñāpāramitā is usually shown as a serene and radiant goddess.

Prajñāpāramitā is usually envisioned as golden or sometimes white in color, with a calm and compassionate expression.
She may appear with either two arms or four.

Like other Mahayana goddesses, she is adorned with divine garments, jewels, and a jeweled crown, symbolizing her royal and divine status.
Her tiara is often described as a five-Buddha crown, symbolizing that she embodies all aspects of enlightened knowledge.

She sits cross-legged in meditation posture (padmāsana) on a lotus throne, representing purity.
Her hands are commonly joined at her heart in the teaching gesture called vyākhyāna mudrā. In this, the thumb and forefinger of her left hand form a circle, representing the wheel of Dharma, while part of her right hand touches the wheel, showing its turning and the revealing of religious truths.

Her main symbol is the Perfection of Wisdom text, which she either holds in her hand or places on a lotus.
She may hold a lotus flower, a rosary (mālā), and most importantly, the Prajñāpāramitā Sutra - symbolizing the wisdom teachings.

A popular way of depicting her, in India and beyond, is the two-armed form where she makes a teaching gesture while holding the stem of a lotus in each hand.
These lotuses bloom above her shoulders and support two Perfection of Wisdom scriptures.

In Nepal and Tibet, exquisite images of Prajñāpāramitā were made in bronze and gold, often worshipped as the sacred mother.

Relationship with Other Deities :
Cundā, another wisdom deity, is often called the "mother of the seventy million Buddhas" (saptakoṭibuddhamatṛ), sharing the "mother of Buddhas" title with Prajñāpāramitā Devī.
Her artistic depictions often resemble those of Prajñāpāramitā Devī so closely that scholars suggest this similarity may have been intentional.

Mañjuśrī is shown with symbols similar to those of Prajñāpāramitā Devi, such as a book, lotuses with books placed on top, and a sword that represents the sharpness of wisdom.
In some traditions, Prajñāpāramitā and Mañjuśrī are paired together, for example in the mandala of the Jñānapada Guhyasamājatantra.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Tara is often seen as an emanation of Prajñāpāramitā Devī. She is also called the "mother of all tathāgatas" in sources like the Tantra Which is the Source for All the Functions of Tara, Mother of All the Tathāgatas.

The Prajñāpāramitā Sutras :
The Prajñāpāramitā Sutras are the foundation of her tradition. They are a vast collection of scriptures that explore emptiness and ultimate reality.

Short Sutras: Heart Sutra (Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya), Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā).
Medium Sutras: 8,000-verse, 18,000-verse, 25,000-verse Sutras.
Long Sutras: 100,000-verse Prajñāpāramitā Sutra.

Prajñāpāramitā Devi is a central figure in Vajrayana and appears in various sutra and Buddhist tantra sources, like the Heart Sutra, Sādhanamāla, Niṣpannayogāvali, the Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa tantra, Dhāranisamuccaya, Mañjusrimūlakalpa, and the Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra.

These texts emphasize that without wisdom, compassion alone cannot lead to enlightenment. Wisdom and compassion must be united, just like father and mother give birth to a child.

The Symbolism of “Mother of Buddhas” :
The title “Mother of Buddhas” is highly symbolic:
She is not a literal mother, but a spiritual one.

All Buddhas “arise” from her because their enlightenment depends on her wisdom.

Just as a mother nourishes her child with milk, Prajñāpāramitā nourishes practitioners with wisdom that removes ignorance.

She symbolizes the fertile ground of emptiness, from which enlightenment blossoms like a lotus.

Practices and Devotion :
For practitioners, Prajñāpāramitā is both a philosophy and a meditation deity.

In study, Buddhists recite and meditate on her sutras, especially the Heart and Diamond Sutras.

In rituals, she is invoked for blessings, protection, and wisdom.

In tantric practice, she is visualized as a luminous goddess, and meditators dissolve into her wisdom-emptiness nature.

Her practice helps remove fear, ignorance, and attachment, leading to peace and liberation.

Spread and Cultural Influence :
In India, she was widely worshipped during the Pāla dynasty, with many sculptures and manuscripts dedicated to her.

In Nepal and Tibet, she is still honored as a meditation goddess, often called Yum Chenmo (“Great Mother”).

In China, she is merged with Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara), sometimes seen as a wisdom aspect of the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

In Japan, she is known as Hannya Bosatsu, linked with Zen practices.

In Southeast Asia, statues of Prajñāpāramitā are found in Indonesia, especially in Java (Example - the famous 13th-century Prajñāpāramitā statue in East Java).

Feminine Principle in Buddhism :
Prajñāpāramitā represents the feminine principle in Buddhism - the nurturing, spacious, and embracing wisdom that gives rise to compassion.

She balances the masculine principle of skillful means (upāya).

Together, wisdom (mother) and compassion (father) produce enlightenment (child = Buddha).

Her feminine image emphasizes that the highest truth is not harsh or rigid but gentle, embracing, and limitless like a mother's love.

Mantras :
Devotees often recite mantras dedicated to Prajñāpāramitā.
The most famous is from the Heart Sutra:
Gate Gate Pāragate Pārasaṃgate Bodhi Svāhā
Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, O awakening, hail!

This mantra expresses the journey from illusion to enlightenment, guided by her wisdom.

Various Prajñāpāramitā sūtras contain mantras for the devi, for example, the Candragarbha prajñāpāramitā contains the following mantra:
oṃ prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe candra-prajñe sarvaśāsakari svāhā
Oṃ Wisdom Wisdom Great Wisdom Moon Wisdom Ruler of All Svāhā

The Saptaśatikā prajñāpāramitā begin with the following invocation mantra:
oṃ namo bhagavatyai āryaprajñāpāramitāyai
oṃ homage to the blessed noble perfection of wisdom

The Ekaślokikā prajñāpāramitā contains the following homage and mantra:
namo bhagavatyai āryaprajñāpāramitāyai
(sa)kalamahāyānāgryadharmatāyai ||

tadyathā | oṃ dhīḥ hṛīḥ śrīḥ śruti-smṛti-vijaye svāhā |

The mantra here (after tadyathā - "thus", "namely" which indicates the beginning of the mantra) is made up of seed syllables (bijas), such as the bija of wisdom (dhīḥ) and the bija of compassion (hrīḥ) along with the words "śruti" (hearing), "smṛti" (mindfulness/remembering), and "vijaye" (victorious).

The Kauśikaprajñāpāramitā contains many mantras, such as:

- gaṅgā gaṅgā na tīrāvabhāsa gaṅgā svāhā
- śrīye śrīye muni śrīye śrīyase svāhā
- oṃ vajra-bale svāhā
- oṃ hrī śrī dhī śruti smṛti mati gati vijaye svāhā
- gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā

The last mantra is also found in the famous Heart Sutra and is perhaps the most famous prajñāpāramitā mantra.

Her bija mantra is most commonly DHĪḤ.

There are various mantras listed in the Sādhanamālā for Prajñāpāramitādevi.
The most common mantra in the Sādhanamālā for the Prajñāpāramitādevi is:
oṃ dhīḥ śruti smṛti vijaye svāhā
(which is also found in a work by Amoghavajra, Taisho no. 1151).

Another common prajñāpāramitā devi mantra in these sadhanas (Sādhanamālā 151 to Sādhanamālā 160) is:
oṁ picu picu prajñāvardhani jvala jvala medhāvardhani dhiri dhiri buddhivardhani svāhā

Oṁ, picu, picu! Increaser of wisdom, burn, burn! Increaser of knowledge, dhiri, dhiri! Increaser of intelligence, svāhā!

This mantra is also found in the Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa tantra.
This mantra is also given in sadhanas to Vajra Saraswati in the Sādhanamālā.
Saraswati is an Indian goddess associated with speech, eloquence and wisdom which was also venerated by Buddhists.

Regarding the Buddhist Saraswati, in some depictions, she is said to be carrying a Prajñāpāramitā sutra.

The Sādhanamālā also contains a sadhana which is said to be by Asanga, it gives the following seed syllable based mantra for Prajñāpāramitādevi:
OṂ ĀḤ DHĪḤ HUṂ SVĀ HĀ.

The Vasudhārādhāraṇī and the Saṃputatantra both contain the following Prajñāpāramitā Devi mantra:
oṃ prajñe mahāprajñe śrutismṛtivijaye svāhā.

The Vasudhārādhāraṇī contains two mantras which name Prajñāpāramitā Devi.
oṃ śrīprajñāpāramite svāhā

Esoteric and Tantric Interpretations :
Prajñāpāramitā Devī, the Mother of All Buddhas, is both a goddess and a philosophy.
She is the living embodiment of wisdom, the essential quality that makes enlightenment possible.

Through her teachings, imagery, and practices, she continues to inspire Buddhists around the world.

She is not only an object of devotion but also a reminder that wisdom and compassion together can free us from suffering.

To honor her is to honor the very heart of the Buddha Dharma, the realization of emptiness and the perfection of wisdom.

In Indian Mahayana Buddhism, worship of the Prajñāpāramitā sutras (in the form of books, Sanskrit: pustaka) was already an important element which is found in the sutras themselves.

The Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra teaches the worship of the sutra on an altar with flowers, lamps, incense and so forth.

The Prajñāpāramitā sutras also reference themselves as the highest object of study and worship, claiming that studying, reciting, and worshiping them is superior to worshiping stupas, Buddha relics, and other objects.

This is because Prajñāpāramitā, the transcendent knowledge that sees all phenomena as illusory and unborn, is the true source of Buddhahood, the "mother" of all Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

The Aṣṭasāhasrikā even states that Buddhas "owe their existence" to her and claims that worshiping her is superior to worshiping stupas or Buddha relics.

The idea of the perfection of wisdom as a being like a mother is also mentioned in the Dà zhìdù lùn (Great Prajñāpāramitā Commentary) translated by Kumarajiva. The text states:
Moreover, the prajñāpāramitā is the mother of the Buddhas (buddhamātṛ). The task (yatna, śrama) of the mother is greater than that of the father. This is why the Buddha considers prajñā as his mother, and the Pratyutpannasamādhi as his father.

Worship of the Prajñāpāramitā goddess may have been witnessed in India by the Chinese pilgrim Faxian (337–422 CE) who mentions that Mahayanists worshiped Prajñāpāramitā, Manjusri and Avalokiteshvara. However, it is not clear what Faxian saw in India, and some scholars argue this passage is a reference to the worship of the sutra, not an image of the goddess.

The earliest images of the deity are from Ellora Caves and date to the 7th century.

An early source on Prajñāpāramitā as a devi is Rāhulabhadra's Prajñāpāramitā stotra which is quoted by

the Dà zhìdù lùn (The Treatise on the Great Prajñāpāramitā).

As a fully developed goddess, she appears in the Sādhanamālā (late eleventh or early twelfth century) which describes various forms of the devi.

Tantric Buddhism also saw Prajñāpāramitā as being present in all women and promoted an attitude of respect and veneration for the feminine form.
As such, all women were seen as embodiments of Prajñāpāramitā.
This attitude is promoted by the mahasiddha Laksminkara in her Adhvayasiddhi which states:
One must not denigrate women, in whatever social class they are born, for they are Lady Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā), embodied in the phenomenal realm.

The Sādhanamālā, an important compendium of contemplative rites, contains nine Prajñāpāramitādevi sādhanās (meditative rituals with mantras and visualizations of deities).

Asanga is said to have composed a Sadhana for Prajñāpāramitādevi.

In the Sādhanamālā, Prajñāpāramitādevi appears in three main forms:
Sitaprajñāpāramitā - A white skinned goddess with Akṣobhya Buddha on her crown.
She sits in the Vajraparyankasana pose on a white lotus, and carries a red lotus in one hand and a scripture in the other.

Pītaprajñāpāramitā - A yellow skinned goddess with Akṣobhya Buddha on her crown.
She makes the Vyākhyānamudrā gesture with both hands. A lotus rising up in her left side holds the Prajñāpāramitā scripture.

Kanakaprajñāpāramitā - Golden in color, she is identical to the above depiction but her two hands make the Dharmacakra mudra.

In later sources like the 11th-century Niṣpannayogāvalī of Abhayākaragupta, she retains a golden color but appears with four arms.

In Tibetan Buddhism, Prajñāpāramitā Devī is "the great mother of dharmakaya, the female Buddha".
According to Tulku Urgyen, she is the feminine aspect of the Adi-Buddha, ultimate truth, called Samantabhadri, the "empty quality of luminous wakefulness”.

Out of the Dharmakaya Prajñāpāramitā emanate five female Buddhas: Dhatvishvari, Mamaki, Buddhalocana, Pandaravasini, and Samayatara.

Vajravarahi is also another female Buddha which is considered to be a sambhoghakaya emanation from Prajñāpāramitā Devī.

The goddess Tara is also considered a nirmanakaya emanation from Prajñāpāramitā.

Indeed, the Dharmakaya as Prajñāpāramitā Devī is the ground of all female Buddhas and all dakinis (sacred feminine deities), including the great Tibetan yogini Yeshe Tsogyal.

Prajñāpāramitā Devī is an important deity in the Chöd lineage of the Tibetan female lama Machig Labdrön (circa 1055–1149).
Machig Labdrön describes Prajñāpāramitā Devī as follows:
The Primordial Mother, Yum Chenmo, is the ultimate nature of all phenomena, emptiness, suchness [Skt. dharmata], free from the two veils. She is the pure essence of the sphere of emptiness, the insight of the non-self. She is the matrix who gives birth to all the

Buddhas of the three times. However, to give beings the opportunity to accumulate spiritual merits, she manifests herself as an object of veneration.

Prajñāpāramitā Devī remains an important object of worship in the Newar Buddhism of Nepal.

In Newar Buddhism, Prajñāpāramitā devi is commonly worshiped through the ritual reading of the Prajñāpāramitā sutras along with votive offerings which are often done to Prajñāpāramitā manuscripts.

Nepalese devotees worship the goddess seeking healing, success in education and business and for positive (karmic) merit.

Prajñāpāramitā Devī was a popular deity in the Mahāyāna Buddhism of Cambodia's Khmer Empire (c. 802–1431), a Southeast Asian empire which supported Mahāyāna for generations.

Numerous Prajñāpāramitā Devī statues survive in Cambodia and many of them are quite different from the South Asian depictions of the deity.

Some of them seem to show a more "esoteric" form of the deity, often with many arms (one specimen sports 22 arms).

Cambodian Prajñāpāramitās are often found in a triad with the Buddha and Avalokiteśvara.

In Cambodia, the importance of the Devī is shown in hymns dedicated to her, often placed at the start of inscriptions.
These hymns describe her as the mother of the Buddhas and praise her as the one who can grant insight and liberation.

Prajnaparamita Devi

Buddhist Tantra

Buddhist Tantra, also known as Vajrayana or the Tantric Vehicle (Tantrayana), represents one of the most profound and transformative paths within the Buddhist tradition.

Emerging as the culmination of the Mahayana teachings, it presents an esoteric system of practices aimed at realizing the enlightened state of a Buddha swiftly—within a single lifetime.

While the earlier vehicles (Shravakayana and Mahayana) emphasize gradual purification through ethics, meditation, and wisdom, Vajrayana introduces methods that transform ordinary experiences directly into the path of awakening through the power of mantra, visualization, deity yoga, and ritual.

Historical Emergence and Development :
The roots of Buddhist Tantra can be traced to India between the 6th and 12th centuries CE, flourishing in the great monastic universities such as Nalanda, Vikramashila, and Odantapuri.

Tantric teachings were revealed to great Mahasiddhas—enlightened adepts like Saraha, Tilopa,

Virupa, and Naropa—who embodied the tantric ideal of uniting wisdom and method beyond conceptual limitations.

These teachings later spread to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, China, and Mongolia, where they evolved into distinct yet harmonious schools such as the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug traditions.

The word Tantra itself means a “continuum” or “weaving together.” It signifies both the unbroken transmission of esoteric instructions and the inseparable unity of method (upaya) and wisdom (prajna) — the two central aspects of the Buddhist path.

Unlike external rituals of mere devotion, Tantric Buddhism internalizes the sacred, teaching that the ultimate temple, mandala, and deity are all manifestations of one’s own mind.

Philosophical Foundations :
At its heart, Buddhist Tantra rests upon the profound Mahayana philosophy of Shunyata (Emptiness) and Bodhicitta (the altruistic aspiration to enlightenment). Without these foundations, Tantric practices are considered incomplete or even dangerous.

Emptiness ensures that practitioners understand all phenomena as devoid of inherent existence, while Bodhicitta transforms every practice into an act of compassion for the liberation of all beings.

Tantra further introduces the concept of the “pure view” — perceiving the world and all beings as inherently divine expressions of wisdom.
This view transforms mundane perception into sacred awareness, leading to non-dual realization, where samsara and nirvana are seen as inseparable.

The Unique Features of Buddhist Tantra :
Buddhist Tantra distinguishes itself through a series of advanced methods designed to accelerate spiritual realization. Among the most prominent are:

1. Deity Yoga (Yidam Practice):
Practitioners visualize themselves as a fully enlightened deity, such as Tara, Avalokiteshvara, or Hevajra, thereby training the mind to identify with enlightened qualities rather than ordinary limitations.

2. Mantra and Mudra:
Sacred syllables (mantras) embody the enlightened speech of Buddhas, while symbolic hand gestures

(mudras) express the divine energy of compassion and wisdom.

3. Mandala Visualization:
The mandala represents the sacred universe and the enlightened mind's perfect order. Through meditation, the practitioner dissolves the duality of subject and object within this sacred space.

4. Guru Yoga:
The teacher (guru or lama) is regarded as the living embodiment of all Buddhas. Devotion to the guru connects the disciple's mind with the enlightened mind, allowing realization to dawn effortlessly.

5. Subtle Body Practices:
Advanced Tantras employ techniques involving the channels (nadi), energies (prana), and essences (bindu) to dissolve mental obscurations and awaken the innate Clear Light Mind, the ultimate nature of consciousness.

The Goal: Transformation into Buddhahood :
While the Sutrayana path leads to enlightenment through gradual purification over countless lifetimes, the Tantric path aims for "Enlightenment in one lifetime."

It does so not by rejecting desires or worldly appearances, but by transforming them into the very fuel of realization.

In Tantra, passion becomes compassion, sound becomes mantra, and thought becomes wisdom.

This principle of transformation rather than renunciation is what makes Vajrayana both powerful and profound.

The ultimate realization in Tantra is the recognition that the mind itself is the Buddha—pure, luminous, and beyond birth and death.

Through the union of bliss and emptiness, the practitioner awakens to the Dharmakaya, the boundless nature of all Buddhas.

Ethics and Secrecy in Tantra :
Because of its power and subtlety, Buddhist Tantra is traditionally transmitted only to those who have received empowerment (abhisheka) from a qualified teacher.

This empowerment initiates the disciple into the mandala of a deity and grants permission to practice specific methods.

Moreover, tantric ethics emphasize the samaya vows, which maintain the purity of view, conduct, and devotion essential for success in the practice.

The secrecy surrounding Tantra is not for elitism but for protection — both of the unprepared practitioner and of the sacred methods themselves, which lose their potency when treated casually.

Buddhist Tantra stands as the crown jewel of the Buddha's teachings — a path of wisdom, compassion, and skillful transformation.

It reveals that enlightenment is not something distant but is, in truth, the very nature of our present mind.

By transforming perception, emotion, and energy into the path, Tantra leads the practitioner from the illusion of samsara to the realization of the innate Buddha within.

Through faith, proper guidance, and disciplined practice, the Tantric path unveils the luminous essence of consciousness — the Union of Bliss and Emptiness — which is the living heart of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Chakrasamvara Tantra

Heruka Chakrasamvara with Vajravarahi

Cakrasamvara Tantra is one of the most important tantras in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The central deity of this tantra is Heruka Cakrasaṃvara, a wrathful form of the Buddha who embodies the transformation of desire.
He is also called Samvara, Śrī Heruka, or simply Heruka.

The word samvara comes from a verb that means "to bind," "to enclose," or "to conceal." In common use, it means "vow," and sometimes "sanctuary."

Commentators say the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra is a timeless divine revelation, given either by the Ādi Buddha Vajradhara or by the goddess Vajravārāhī.

The full sanskrit title in the manuscript is Śrī-Cakrasaṃvara-nāma-mahāyoginī-tantra-rāja, meaning the Great King of Yoginī Tantras called the Śrī Cakrasaṃvara.

It is also known as the Discourse of Śrī Heruka (Śrīherukābhidhāna) and the Samvara Light (Laghusaṃvara).

In Tibetan, it is called Khorlo Demchok (འཁོར་ལོ་ཡང་དག་མཆོག་), which means "Wheel of Supreme Bliss" or “The Binding of the Wheels"

The tantra was composed around the 8th–9th century CE in Northern India. It was flourishing in Nālandā and Vajrayāna circles and became very popular between the 10th and 13th centuries.

The lineage was passed on by great Indian Mahāsiddhas such as Luipa, Krishnacharya, Ghantapa, Kambalapa, and Dombi Heruka.

In Tibet, it was brought by Marpa Lotsawa, Maitrīpa, and others.

Today, its study and practice is maintained by the Newar Buddhist community in the Kathmandu valley, as well as by many Tibetan Buddhists, not only in Tibet itself but in other regions influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, including Mongolia, Russia, China, and elsewhere, as Tibetan lamas have been living and teaching in diaspora.

It is important in Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug schools.

Cakrasaṃvara is one of the five great tantric systems practiced in Tibet, along with Guhyasamāja, Hevajra, Kālacakra, Yamāntaka.

In Tibetan classification, this tantra belongs to the "mother" class of Anuttarayoga (Unsurpassable yoga, Highest Yoga Tantra) class, also known as the Yoginītantras. These tantras were known for their sexual yogas.

This tantra is strongly associated with the Yoginī Tantras, which emphasize female wisdom deities.

The text survives in several Sanskrit and Tibetan manuscripts. There are at least eleven surviving Sanskrit commentaries on the tantra and various Tibetan commentaries exist.

The main root text of Śrī-Cakrasaṃvara Tantra has about ~700 verses and 51 or 52 Chapters (Pāṭalas), depending on the version.

Śrī-Cakrasaṃvara Tantra covers Mandala creation and visualization, Generation stage and completion stage meditations, Yoginī worship and sacred feast (gaṇacakra), Mantras and mudrās, Rituals of empowerment (abhiṣeka), Subjugation of worldly deities, Liberation and Buddhahood through tantra practice.

Key **Indian Commentators** include Jayabhadra, Kambalapa, Krishnacharya, Bhavabhaṭṭa, Devagupta, Bhavyakīrti, Durjayacandra, Tathāgatarakṣita, Indrabuti, Vīravajra, Śāśvatavajra.

Tibetan Commentators include Tsongkhapa, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, Marpa, Buton, etc.

Their commentaries focus on rituals, yogic methods, and symbolic language.

The Cakrasamvara tantra mostly contains rituals and yogic practices which produce mundane siddhis (accomplishments) – such as flight – as well as the supreme siddhi of awakening.

It is practiced to attain Buddhahood in one lifetime, realize Mahāmudrā (Great Seal – union of bliss and emptiness), to transform desire instead of suppressing it, and liberation not only for self but for all sentient beings.

Samvara is one of the main principal yidam (meditational deities) of the Sarma schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

The Iconography of Heruka Cakrasaṃvara :
Samvara is usually shown with a blue body, four faces, and twelve arms, and embracing his consort, the wisdom

dakini Vajravārāhī (Vajrayoginī) in Yab-Yum (sexual union).

In the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala, at its center is a colored many petaled lotus on top of Mount Sumeru.
This is where the deity is placed..
He stands in the archer stance (ālīḍha posture).

He tramples on Bhairava (Śiva) and Kālarātri (Umā/Parvati), who lie on a solar disk placed on the lotus.

He has a black body and has four faces which are, beginning with the front [and continuing around counter-clockwise], black, green, red, and yellow, each of which has three eyes.

He wears a tiger skin around his waist and has twelve arms.

His two main hands hold a vajra and a vajra-bell, while also embracing Vajravārāhī, symbolizing the union of method and wisdom, bliss and emptiness.

His two upper hands (behind back) hold a white elephant hide dripping with blood, symbolizing the defeat of pride.

His other Right Hands holds Drum (ḍamaru) – rhythm of creation. Axe – cuts ignorance. Flaying knife (kartri) – severs ego. Trident – mastery over the three poisons.

His other Left Hands holds Khaṭvāṅga staff marked with a vajra – tantric power, union with wisdom. Skull bowl (kapāla) filled with blood – transformation of desire. Vajra noose – control of passions. Severed head of Brahmā – victory over creator-ego and false views.

A garland of Fifty freshly severed heads hangs about his neck. His sacred thread is made of human sinews.

He wears six bone ornaments (crown, earrings, necklace, armlets, bracelets, anklets).

He has a row of five skulls above his forehead, symbolizing the transformation of the five poisons into five wisdoms.

His black dreadlocked hair rises upward, topped by a left-oriented crescent moon and a double vajra.

He is in fierce meditative state (vikṛtadhyāna), showing fangs.

He embodies the nine dramatic sentiments (navarasa) into one enlightened form.

Other forms of Samvara also exist, such as two-armed or four-armed versions.

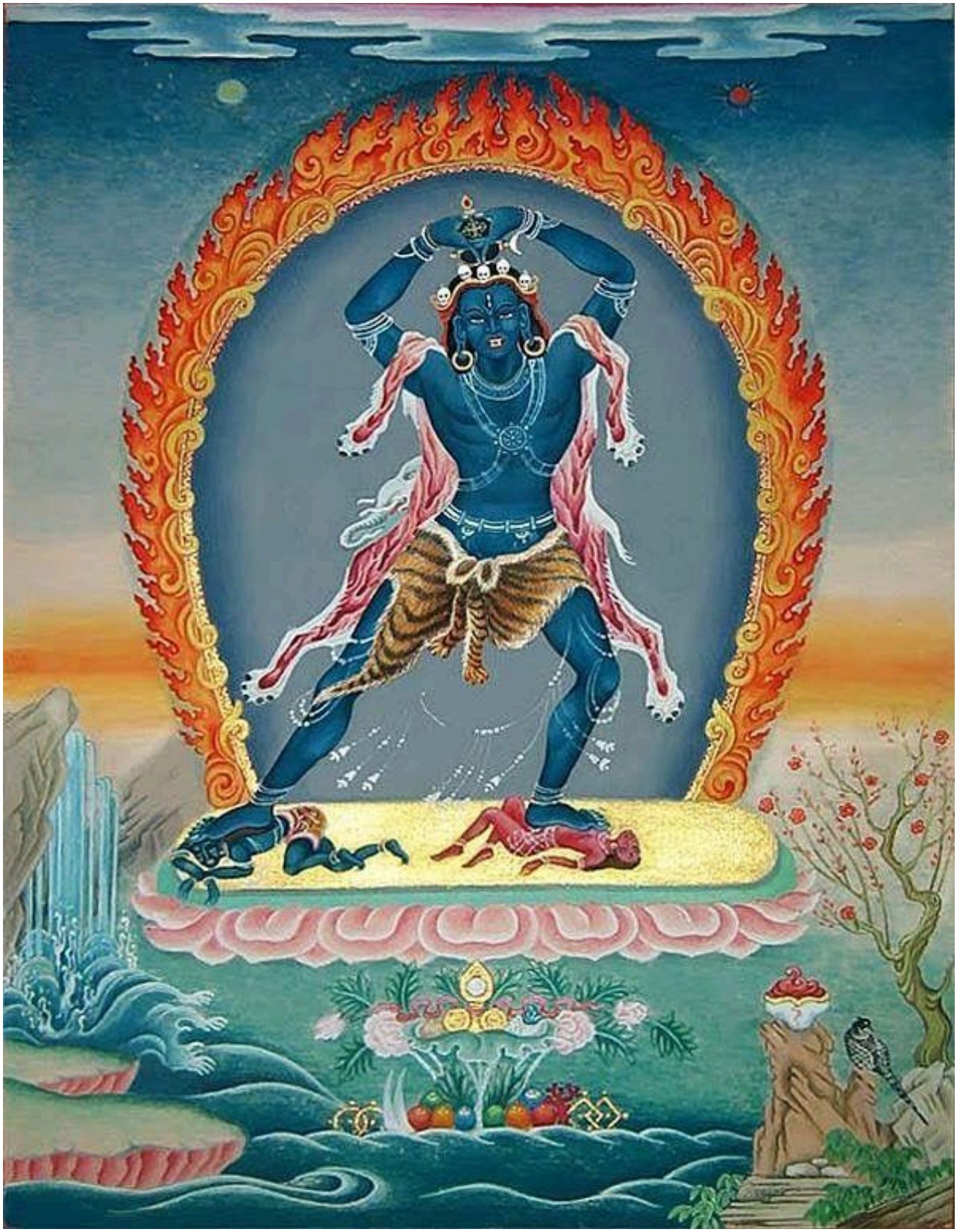
Mantras :
The Root Mantra is
Oṁ śrī vajra heruka hūṁ hūṁ phaṭ
It varies across different lineages.

Vajravārāhī / Vajrayoginī mantras are also central to this practice.

Cakrasamvara tantra is believed to be especially effective in our degenerate age (kali yuga) because it works directly with desire. It is still widely practiced by Vajrayāna practitioners today.

These rites were considered secret, and one had to receive instructions on them from a guru after initiation. Without commentary or guidance from a teacher, it is hard to understand the tantra’s practices.

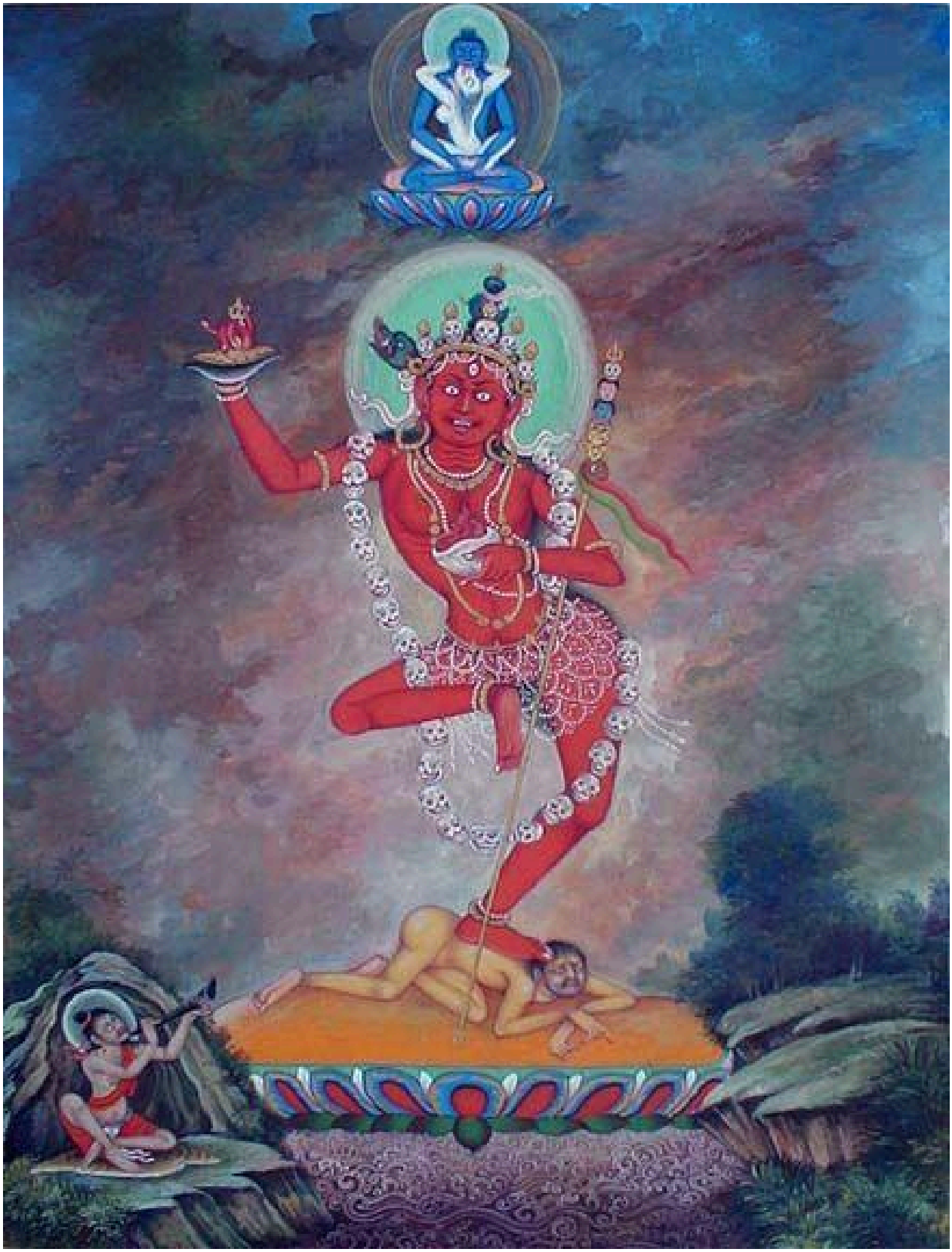
Two Hands Chakrasamvara with Vajravarahi Above Vajradhara



Heruka Chakrasamvara

Vajrayogini and Vajravarahi

Vajrayogini



Vajravarahi

Vajrayoginī (Sanskrit: वज्रयोगिनी) and Vajravārāhī (Sanskrit: वज्रवराही) are among the most important deities in Vajrayāna Buddhism, especially in the Highest Yoga Tantra tradition.

In Vajrayana she is considered a female Buddha and a ḍākiṇī.

Vajrayoginī is often described with the epithet sarvabuddhaḍākiṇī, meaning "the ḍākiṇī [who is the Essence] of all Buddhas".

Vajrayoginī and her special form Vajravārāhī, represents the ultimate wisdom of all Buddhas, the female embodiment of enlightenment, and the union of bliss and emptiness.

Vajrayoginī is often regarded as the "queen of the dakinīs," the enlightened female beings who guide practitioners on the path of tantra.

Her practices are said to be the swiftest path to Buddhahood in one lifetime.

She is an Anuttarayoga Tantra meditational deity (iṣṭadevatā).

The practice of Vajrayoginī belongs to the Mother Tantra class of Anuttarayoga Tantras along with other tantras such as the Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra Tantras.

Her practice includes methods for preventing ordinary death, intermediate state (bardo) and rebirth (samsara) by transforming them into paths to enlightenment, and for transforming all mundane daily experiences into higher spiritual paths.

She appears as the consort of Padma Thotreng Tsal, and of Cakrasaṃvara.

In Vajrayoginī standalone practice, her inseparable consorts are represented by the khatvanga (staff) on her left shoulder.
Vajrayoginī's khaṭvāṅga is marked with a vajra and from it hangs a damaru drum, a bell, and a triple banner.

As Vajravārāhī, her consort is Chakrasaṃvara, who is often depicted symbolically as a khaṭvāṇga on her left shoulder. In this form she is also the consort of Jinasagara, the red Avalokiteśvara.

In the Nyingma school Vajravārāhī is the consort of Hayagriva, the wrathful form of Avalokiteshvara.

The name Vajrayoginī means “the Vajra Yoginī” or “the Diamond Female Practitioner of Yoga.”
Here, vajra symbolizes indestructibility and ultimate reality, while yoginī means a female yogi who has mastered the path of meditation.

Vajravārāhī (The Vajra Sow) is a special form of Vajrayoginī.
The word vārāhī means “the sow (female pig).”
She can be also seen as a wrathful form of Vajrayogini.

She is called this because in her wrathful Vajravārāhī form, She is often pictured with a sow's head on the side of her own as an ornament and in one form has the head of a sow herself, symbolizing the transformation of ignorance (which is depicted as a pig in Buddhist teachings) into wisdom.

Vajravārāhī (The Indestructible Sow) is considered a female buddha and "the root of all emanations of dakinis”.

Vajravarahi manifests in the colors of white, yellow, red, green, blue, and black.
While Vajrayogini is always red in color.

The origins of Vajrayoginī practice are found in the tantras of India, especially in the 11th and 12th centuries.

Her practices were revealed by great Indian Mahāsiddhas such as Naropa, Tilopa, and Indrabhuti, who received her instructions in visions and transmitted them to disciples.

From India, these teachings traveled to Tibet, where they became central in all four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism: Gelug, Kagyu, Sakya, and Nyingma.

In the Kagyu tradition, Vajrayoginī is linked with the Six Yogas of Naropa.
In the Sakya tradition, she is connected with the Hevajra Tantra.
In the Gelug school, her practice is considered one of the highest and most secret teachings.
Thus, she is universal across Vajrayāna lineages.

Vajrayoginī is visualized in the form of a naked 16-year-old female with red skin, a third eye of wisdom set vertically on her forehead, unbound flowing hair, and numerous other symbolic attributes such as a curved knife and either a skull cup or a damaru.

Vajrayoginī is always shown in a youthful, radiant, and dynamic form.

She embodies the energy of transformation.

Her body color is usually deep red, symbolizing passion transformed into wisdom.

She stands in a dancing pose (ardha-paryaṅka) or one-legged dancing stance, showing the union of method and wisdom.
Her extended right leg treads on the chest of red Kālarātri, while her bent left leg treads on the forehead of black Bhairava, bending his head backward and pressing it into his back at the level of his heart.

She has one face with three eyes, representing seeing past, present, and future.

She holds a curved knife (kartika) in her right hand, symbolizing cutting through ignorance and ego, and a skull cup (kapāla) in her left hand, filled with blood or nectar of bliss and wisdom, that she drinks from with an upturned mouth.

Sometimes she carries a tantric staff (khaṭvāṅga), representing her inseparable consort and the union of wisdom and compassion.

She is adorned with bone ornaments, symbolizing impermanence and freedom from attachment.
She wears a crown of five human skulls on her head and a necklace of fifty human skulls.

She is depicted as standing in the center of a blazing fire of exalted wisdom.

Vajravārāhī has all the features of Vajrayoginī, but with one special addition:
She has a small sow’s head protruding from her right temple.
This is not a literal head but a symbolic one, showing that she has conquered ignorance (represented by the pig in Buddhist teachings).

The two legs of Vajravārāhī are in the dancing posture, on a symbolic human corpse.

This form is especially wrathful and powerful, used in advanced tantric practices to overcome obstacles and inner delusions.

Each aspect of Vajrayoginī's form and mandala is designed to convey a spiritual meaning.

For example :
Red color: Passion transformed into wisdom.
Her brilliant red-colored body symbolizes the blazing of her tummo (candali) or "inner fire" of spiritual transformation as well as life force (Shakti), blood of birth and menstrual blood.

Curved knife: Cutting attachment, ego, and ignorance.
The curved driguk knife in her right hand shows her power to cut the continuum of the delusions, attachment, ego, ignorance, and obstacles of her followers and of all living beings.

Drinking the blood from the skull cup (kapala) in her left hand symbolizes her experience of supreme bliss.

Dancing posture: Freedom from worldly bonds and the play of enlightened activity.

Bone ornaments: Realization of impermanence and death, leading to fearlessness.

Her young age of 16 signifies the prime of youth, the potential for new beginnings and the unhindered purity of a fresh mind.

The lack of clothing on her is not meant to be sexual but rather signifies the shedding of worldly concerns, ego and illusions.

Her single face symbolizes that she has realized that all phenomena are of one nature in emptiness.

Her two arms symbolize her realization of the two truths. Her three eyes represent her ability to see everything in the past, present and future.

She looks upward toward the Pure Dākiṇī Land, demonstrating her attainment of outer and inner Pure Dākiṇī Land, and indicating that she leads her followers to these attainments.

In Buddhist tantric texts, Vajravārāhī and Cakrasaṃvara defeat Bhairava and Kālī, who are the embodiments of ego.
The battle takes place in twenty-four sacred sites, where each side sends out twenty-four forms of themselves to fight.

Sow's head in Vajravārāhī: Ignorance itself is transformed into wisdom.

She is both compassionate and wrathful, compassionate because she saves beings, wrathful because she destroys negative emotions.

Vajrayoginī is considered the principal meditation deity (yidam) in many advanced practices.
Practitioners meditate on her form, recite her mantras, and visualize themselves as Vajrayoginī to realize their own Buddha-nature.

Her practice is especially known for:
Quick path to enlightenment: She is said to grant realization in one lifetime.

Transformation of desire: Instead of suppressing passion and attachment, her practice transforms them into wisdom.

Dakini guidance: She embodies the dakini principle, which guides practitioners through visions, dreams, and inner wisdom.

Vajrayoginī's mantra is often given in secret by a qualified lama, but a common one is:
OM VAJRAVAIROCHANIYA HUM HUM PHAT SVAHA.

Her practices include:
Sādhanā (meditation): Visualizing her form and reciting her mantra.
The purpose of visualizing Vajrayoginī is to gain realizations of generation stage tantra, in which the practitioner mentally visualises themself as their yidam or meditational deity and their surroundings as the Deity's maṇḍala.
The purpose of the generation stage is to overcome ordinary appearances and ordinary conceptions, which are said in Vajrayana Buddhism to be the obstructions to liberation and enlightenment

Completion stage yogas: Advanced practices such as tummo (inner heat) and illusory body yoga.

Vajrayoginī is a key figure in the advanced Tibetan Buddhist practice of Chöd, where she appears in her Kālikā or Vajravārāhī forms.
In Chöd, she is invoked in the practice of offering one’s body to cut through ego.

Vajrayoginī also appears in versions of Guru yoga in the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism.
In one popular system the practitioner worships their guru in the form of Milarepa, whilst visualizing themself as Vajrayoginī.

Vajrayana teaches that the two stages of the practice of Vajrayoginī (generation stage and completion stage) were originally taught by Vajradhara.

Vajradhara manifested in the form of Heruka to expound the Root Tantra of Chakrasaṃvara, and it was in this tantra that he explained the practice of Vajrayoginī.

All the lineages of Vajrayoginī practice can be traced back to this original revelation of Vajradhara.

Of these lineages, there are three that are most commonly practiced: Narokhachö, Maitrikhachö, and Indrakhachö.

The Narokhachö lineage was transmitted from Vajrayoginī to Naropa.
The Maitrikhachö lineage was transmitted from Vajrayoginī to Maitripa.
The Indrakhachö lineage was transmitted from Vajrayoginī to Indrabodhi.

Vajrayoginī is closely linked with:
Hevajra: In the Sakya school, she is the consort of Hevajra.

Chakrasamvara: In the Kagyu school, she is the consort of Chakrasamvara.

Amitabha Buddha is often shown above her head, representing her connection to the Buddha of Infinite Light.

She appears in a maṇḍala that is visualized by the practitioner according to a sādhanā describing the practice of the particular tantra.

There are several collections containing sādhanās associated with Vajrayoginī including one collection, the Guhyasamayasādhanamālā, containing only Vajrayoginī sādhanās and comprising forty-six works by various authors.

Vajrayoginī is not just a goddess to be worshipped; she represents the wisdom of emptiness.

Her body is a meditation tool to understand that all forms are empty of inherent existence, yet they appear through interdependent origination.

The blissful energy she symbolizes is the natural state of mind when freed from grasping and delusion.

Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī are among the most widely practiced tantric deities in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Mongolia.

In Tibetan Buddhism, many great masters achieved enlightenment through her practice.

In the Kathmandu valley of Nepal there are several important Newar temples dedicated to different forms of Vajrayogini.
These temples are important power places in both Newar and Tibetan Buddhism.
These temples include the Sankhu Vajrayogini temple, Vidhyeshvari Vajrayogini temple, Parping Vajrayogini temple, and the Guhyeshwari temple.

The severed-headed form of Vajrayoginī is similar to the Indian goddess Chinnamasta, who is recognized by both Hindus and Buddhists

She is especially revered as the “mother of all Buddhas” because her wisdom is the foundation of enlightenment.

Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī are not separate from us, they represent the enlightened qualities within our own mind.

By meditating on them, practitioners connect with their inner wisdom, transform negative emotions into enlightened energy, and swiftly progress toward Buddhahood.

She is seen as being ideally suited for people with strong passions, providing the way to transform those passions into enlightened virtues.

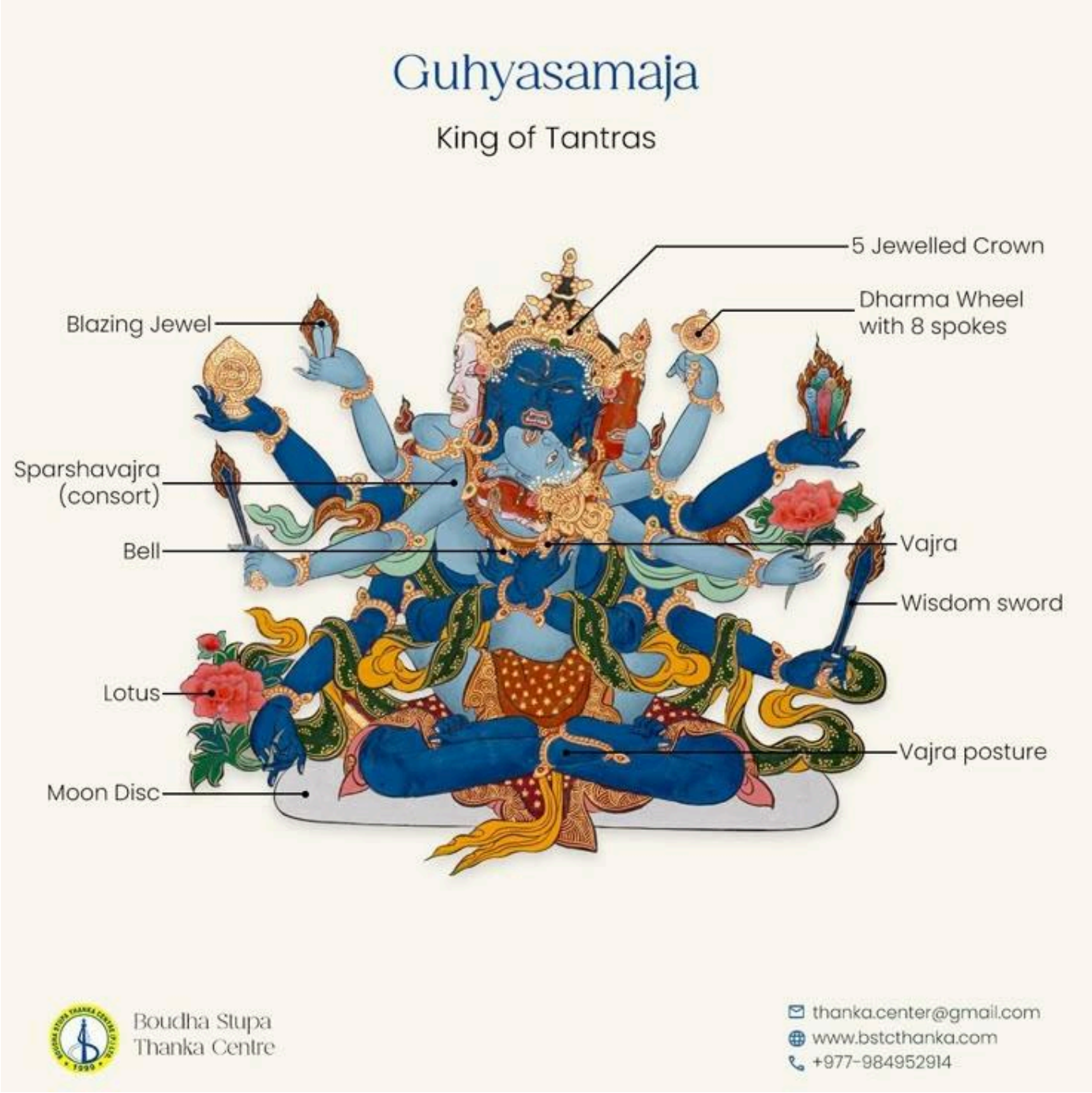
She is an important deity for tantric initiation, especially for new initiates as Vajrayoginī's practice is said to be well-suited to those with strong desirous attachment, and to those living in the current "degenerate age".

In simple words, Vajrayoginī is the embodiment of the path where desire becomes wisdom, suffering becomes freedom, and ordinary life becomes the play of enlightenment.

Vajrayogini

Vajravarahi Vajrayogini of Five Buddha Families

Gyuhasamaj Tantra



Gyuhasamaj

The Guhyasamāja Tantra is one of the most important and foundational scriptures of Vajrayāna Buddhism, especially within the tradition of the Highest Yoga Tantra (Anuttarayoga Tantra).

It is regarded as the “root of all tantras” and serves as the central model for tantric systems that developed later.

The term Guhyasamāja (गुह्यसमाजतंत्र) literally means “Secret Assembly” or “Assembly of Secrets”.
It reflects both the esoteric nature of its teachings and the sacred gathering of enlightened deities within the mandala.

The Sanskrit title is Śrī-Guhyasamāja-nāma-Mahā-tantra-rāja, meaning “The Great King of Tantras called the Glorious Guhyasamāja.”

In Tibetan it is called gsang ba’i ’dus pa (གསང་བའི་འདུས་པ་) , which means “Secret Assembly.”

Scholars generally place the composition of the Guhyasamāja Tantra in India around the 5th–6th century CE, making it one of the earliest Anuttarayoga Tantras.

It became highly influential in great monastic centers such as Nālandā.

It is considered a Father Tantra, emphasizing method (upāya) in union with wisdom (prajñā).
Its structured system of deity yoga and subtle-body practices influenced later tantras such as Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra.

The tantra is said to originate from Vajradhara, the primordial Buddha, and was transmitted through an illustrious Indian lineage that includes:
Nāgārjuna – received the tantra and composed key commentaries. Foundational works explaining the tantra.

Āryadeva – his disciple, who systematized tantric practice. commentaries on ritual and practice.

Candrakīrti – explained the philosophical and yogic aspects. Detailed expositions linking tantra with Madhyamaka philosophy.

Buddhajñānapāda – wrote ritual, meditative and yogic manuals.

Nāropa – preserved and clarified the tantric stages of practice.

The tantra entered Tibet during the early translations (9th–10th centuries) through masters such as Rinchen Zangpo (958–1055).
It became especially central in the Sakya and later the Gelug schools, where Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) made it the very heart of Highest Yoga Tantra study and practice.

Tsongkhapa (Gelug) – wrote an extensive synthesis, making Guhyasamāja the centerpiece of the Gelugpa tantric curriculum.

Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sakya) – preserved and explained ritual and mandala traditions.

Other Tibetan scholars across schools also studied and transmitted it, though it reached its greatest prominence in the Gelug tradition.

The Guhyasamāja Tantra has had a profound influence on the development of Vajrayāna Buddhism:

It is regarded as the “King of Tantras” in Tibet.

This tantra forms the core practice of the Gelug school, following Tsongkhapa’s system.

It provided the model for tantric ritual, philosophy, and yogic methods in later systems.

Its study remains highly respected among scholars, monastics, and practitioners in Tibet, Mongolia, Nepal, and Bhutan.

The Guhyasamāja Tantra belongs to the Father class of Anuttarayoga Tantra, emphasizing method (upāya) while maintaining inseparability from wisdom (prajñā).

The root text of the Guhyasamāja Tantra consists of 17 chapters (pāṭalas).

These cover:
Construction of the mandala and arrangement of deities
Rituals of initiation (abhiṣeka) and empowerment
Generation stage meditations and mantra practice
Completion stage yogas of subtle body transformation
Ethical conduct and guidance for tantric practitioners

The central deity of the tantra is Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra, a wrathful yet compassionate heruka embodying the union of bliss and emptiness.

Akṣobhyavajra is a form of Akṣobhya, one of the five tathāgathas.

He is dark blue in colour, symbolizing infinite space and clarity of mind.

He has typically three faces (sometimes five), expressing different aspects of enlightened activity.

He has twelve arms, holding vajras, swords, lotuses, skull cups, and other symbolic implements.

Akṣobhyavajra holds a vajra and bell (ghanta) in his first two hands, and other hands hold the symbols of the four other tathāgathas: wheel of Vairocana and lotus of Amitābha in his rights, and gem of Ratnasambhava and sword of Amoghasiddhi in his lefts.

He is in the dynamic ālīḍha stance or seated in vajraparyaṅka, trampling obstructive forces.

He is united with Sparśavajrī (Vajrajñānā), symbolizing the inseparability of method and wisdom.

He is adorned with bone ornaments, tiger skin, and garland of skulls, symbolizing transformation of the afflictions into wisdom.

There are two main commentarial traditions in the Guhyasamāja Tantra, the Ārya Tradition and the Jñānapada tradition.

In the practice of the Ārya Tradition, the central deity of the Guhyasamāja is blue-black Akṣobhyavajra, a form of Akṣobhya, one of the five tathāgathas (pañcatathāgata), sometimes called the dhyāni buddhas.
Akṣobhyavajra holds a vajra and bell (ghanta) in his first two hands, and other hands hold the symbols of the four other tathāgathas: wheel of Vairocana and lotus of Amitābha in his rights, and gem of Ratnasambhava and sword of Amoghasiddhi in his lefts.
The maṇḍala consists of thirty-two deities in all.

In the Jñānapada tradition, the central deity is yellow Mañjuvajra, a form of Maṇjuśrī, with nineteen deities in the mandala.
Mañjuvajra has three faces—the right one is white and red one on the left—and six arms.
The three faces may represent the three main channels of the subtle body, the three stages of purification of the mind or the illusory body, light, and their union.
Mañjuvajra holds in his hands a sword and a book, and two of his other hand a bow and arrow represent skillful means (upāya).

The mandala of Guhyasamāja is a structured assembly of deities:
Center: Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra in union with consort.
Circle of 32 deities: emanations representing the enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities.
Outer circles: Yoginīs, guardians, and protectors.

The mandala is visualized as a cosmic palace, transforming ordinary perception into divine perception.

The tantra contains comprehensive instructions on:
Empowerment (abhiṣeka) – initiation into the mandala of deities.

Generation Stage (utpattikrama) – visualizing oneself as the deity, constructing the mandala, visualization, mantra recitation, and cultivating divine perception.

Completion Stage (niṣpannakrama) – yogas of the subtle body (channels, winds, drops), inner heat (tummo), union of bliss and emptiness, and direct realization of bliss and emptiness.

Mudrā and mantra – transformation of body, speech, and mind into enlightened form.

Philosophical view – realization of emptiness through the inseparability of wisdom and method.

The principal mantra of the tradition is:
Oṁ Hūṁ Vajra Guhyasamāja
Sarva-tathāgata-anuttara-jñāna-vajra Svabhāvātmako ’ham

“I am of the nature of the vajra of supreme knowledge of all the Buddhas, the Secret Assembly.”

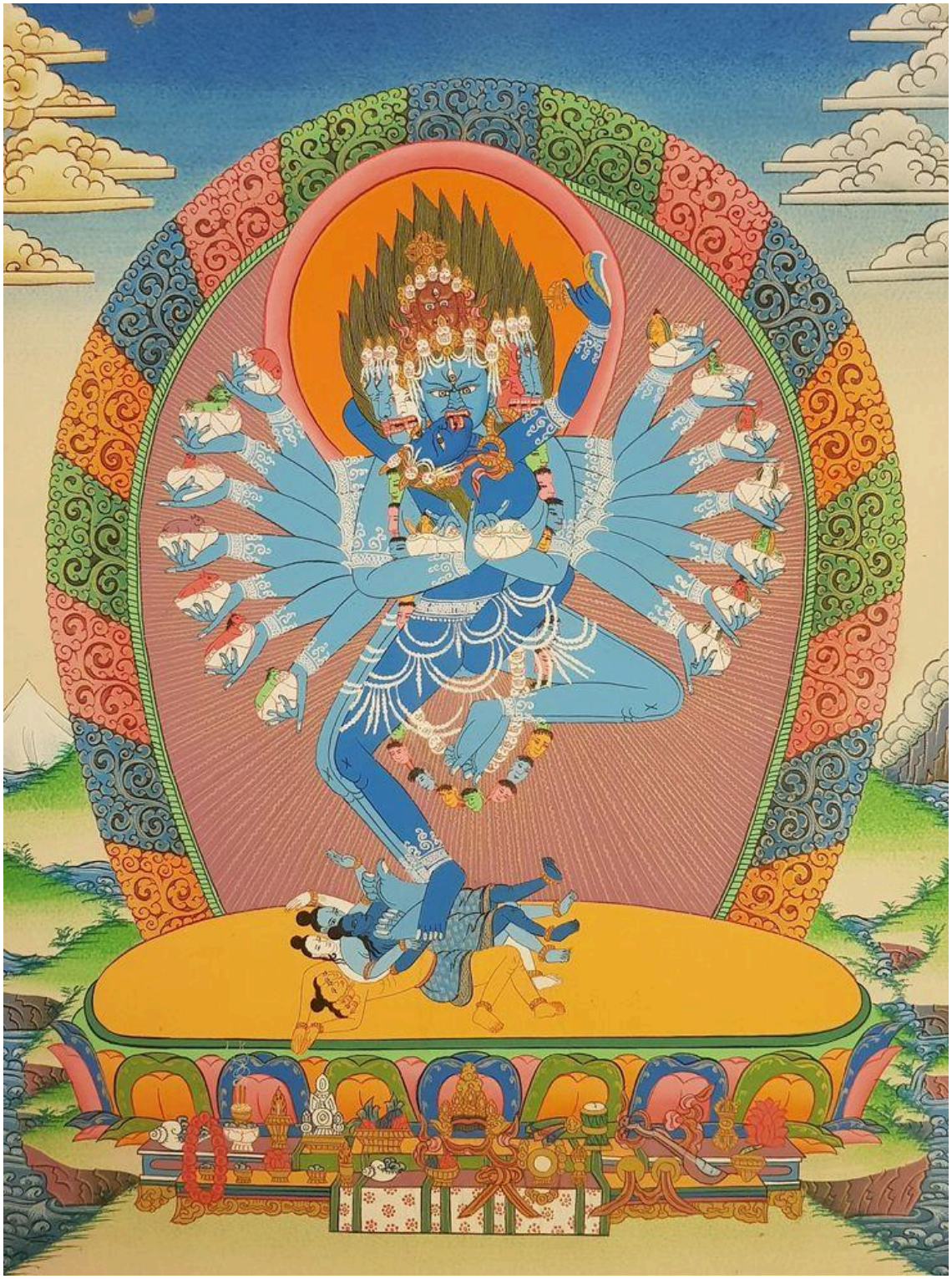
The Guhyasamāja Tantra aims to guide practitioners to:
Achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime
Realize Mahāmudrā, the ultimate union of bliss and emptiness
Transform desire and ignorance into wisdom and compassion
Purify karma and remove obstacles
Unite ethical discipline, meditative concentration, and tantric ritual

It unites profound philosophy with subtle yogic practices, offering a complete path to enlightenment.

Through its mandala, rituals, and meditations, practitioners are guided to transform ordinary perception into the awareness of Buddhahood itself.

Guhyasamāja

Hevajra Tantra



Heruka Hevajra

The Hevajra Tantra is one of the most influential tantras in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The central deity of this tantra is Heruka Hevajra, a wrathful form of the Buddha who embodies the transformation of ignorance into wisdom.

He is regarded as a supreme yidam deity in the Yoginītantra tradition.

The Sanskrit title is Śrī-Hevajra-nāma-mahāyoginī-tantra-rāja, meaning “The Great King of Yoginī Tantras called the Glorious Hevajra.”

In Tibetan it is called Kye’i rdo rje (ཀྱེ་འི་རྡོ་རྗེ་), which literally means “Diamond of Hey!” or “Vajra of Exclamation.”

This reflects the mantra-like syllable “He” or “Hey,” which symbolizes primordial awakening.

The tantra is said to have been revealed by the Ādi-Buddha Vajradhara.

Some traditions also describe it as taught by the goddess Nairātmyā (“the Lady of Non-Self”) to great siddhas, as she represents the embodiment of wisdom and emptiness.

The Hevajra Tantra was composed in India around the late 8th to 10th century CE, roughly contemporary with the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.

It became highly popular in Eastern India, particularly in Bengal, Oḍḍiyāna, and Magadha.

It is one of the principal Yoginītantras, and together with Cakrasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja, Kālacakra, and Yamāntaka, forms the five great tantric systems practiced in Tibet.

The Hevajra Tantra belongs to the Mother class of Anuttarayoga Tantra (Highest Yoga Tantra), the Yoginītantras, which emphasize wisdom (prajñā), the role of female deities, and subtle yogic methods.

These tantras are known for their use of sexual yogas, symbolic language, and rituals of transformation.

The root tantra survives in Sanskrit fragments, a complete Tibetan translation, and several commentaries.

It is composed of two main parts (paṭalas), with a total of 32 chapters.

The first part describes the maṇḍala, initiation (abhiṣeka), vows, rituals, and practices.

The second part expounds yogic methods, philosophical instructions, and the realization of Mahāmudrā.

The tantra integrates both ritual practice and profound Buddhist philosophy, especially the doctrine of śūnyatā (emptiness) and prajñāpāramitā (perfection of wisdom).

The Hevajra Tantra generated a rich body of Indian and Tibetan commentaries.

The tantra spread widely through the Mahāsiddha tradition, being transmitted by masters such as Saroruha, Virūpa, Dombi Heruka, and others.

Key Indian commentators include:
Virūpa – who is said to have received the Hevajra teachings directly from Nairātmyā.
Saroruha
Dombi Heruka
Ratnākaraśānti
Śākyamitra
Indrabuti
Kambhala

In Tibet, the transmission was carried mainly by the great translator Marpa Lotsawa and the Indian pandits Gayadhara and Sajjana.

In Tibet, commentators include:
Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (founder of the Sakya tradition, who systematized the Hevajra practice into the Lamdre or "Path with the Result")
Tsongkhapa
Marpa Lotsawa
Buton Rinchen Drub

The commentaries explain symbolic language, yogic practices, initiations, and philosophical interpretations.

Tāranātha lists Saroruha and Kampala (also known as Lva-va-pā, Kambhalī) as its "bringers":

. . . the foremost yogi Virupa meditated on the path of Yamāri and attained siddhi under the blessings of Vajravārāhi, . . . His disciple Dombi Heruka..understood the essence of the Hevajra Tantra, and composed many śāstras like the Nairātmā-devi-sādhana and the Sahaja-siddhi. He also conferred abhiṣeka on his own disciples. After this, two ācāryas Lva-va-pā and Saroruha brought the Hevajra Tantra. . . . Siddha Saroruha was the first to bring the Hevajra-pitṛ-sādhana.

Another lineage, mentioned by Jamgon Kongtrul, goes from Vilāśyavajra to Anangavajra to Saroruha, and thence to Indrabhuti.

Jamgon Amyeshab, the 28th throne-holder of the Sakya tradition, says that the Hevajra Tantra was revealed to Virupa by Vajranairatma in the form of a Nirmanakaya. He also says that Vajranairatma revealed it to Dombhi Heruka, who was Virupa's senior disciple.
From Dombhi Heruka, the main Sakya lineage of teachings on the Hevajra Tantra has been passed down.

The Yogaratnamālā, one of the most important commentaries on the Hevajra Tantra, was written by Kṛṣṇa (also called Kāṇha). He taught Bhadrapada, another commentator, who later taught Tilopa. Tilopa then taught Nāropa, who also wrote a commentary on the Hevajra Tantra. Nāropa passed this knowledge to Marpa (1012–1097 AD), who brought the teachings to Tibet.

Marpa also learned about the Hevajra Tantra from Maitrīpa (also known as Advayavajra), a great master who had been expelled from Vikramashila Monastery for practicing with a yoginī during the time when Atīśa was abbot.

It became especially central in the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism, where it serves as the root tantra of their entire Vajrayāna system.
The Hevajra Tantra shaped the entire Sakya school's Vajrayāna system, especially the Lamdre (Path and Fruit) teachings.
It also influenced Kagyu Mahāmudrā practice and Gelug tantric studies.

In Nepal, the Newar Buddhist community still preserves Hevajra rituals and dance traditions.

The Chinese version of the Hevajra Tantra was translated by Fa-hu (Dharmapāla) (960-1128 AD). However, the Hevajra Tantra did not become popular in China.

Surviving images indicate that the Hevajra Tantra was present in Cambodia during the Khmer Empire and its practice thrived in Cambodia from the 10th to 13th centuries.

In 1244 the grandson of Genghis Khan, Prince Godan, invited Sakya Pandita to Mongolia and was initiated by him into the Hevajra teachings.
In 1253 Kublai Khan invited Sakya Pandita's nephew Chogyal Phagpa to court.

As a result, Buddhism was declared the state religion and Phagpa was given authority over three of Tibet's provinces.

The Deity Hevajra is a wrathful heruka deity, representing the union of bliss and emptiness.

Hevajra has four forms described in the Hevajra Tantra and four forms described the Samputa Tantra:
Kaya (Body) Hevajra
Vak (Speech) Hevajra
Citta (Mind) Hevajra
Hrdaya (Heart) Hevajra

His form varies across different traditions, but the most common depiction is:

He is dark blue or black in colour.

He has eight faces of different colors (black, white, red, green, yellow, smoky, dark red, and blue).
Each face shows fierce fangs and three eyes.

He has sixteen arms, holding skull cups filled with various animals and deities symbolizing the transformation of worldly powers into enlightened wisdom.

He has four legs trampling on four gods of hindrance, often Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra (Śiva), and Indra, symbolizing victory over saṃsāric deities and false views.

He is depicted in union (yab-yum) with Nairātmyā, the goddess of non-self, who embodies wisdom.

He is adorned with bone ornaments, garlands of skulls, and tiger skins, representing impermanence and the transformation of death into the path.

The Hevajra maṇḍala places Hevajra and Nairātmyā at the center, surrounded by circles of yoginīs and deities.

The maṇḍala is both an external sacred diagram for rituals and an internal map of meditation.

Practitioners visualize themselves as Hevajra, dissolving ordinary perception into divine wisdom.

The tantra outlines:
Initiation (abhiṣeka): Empowerments granting permission to practice the maṇḍala.

Generation stage (utpattikrama): Visualization of Hevajra and his consort, recitation of mantra, mandala offerings.

Completion stage (niṣpannakrama): Yogas of inner heat (caṇḍālī), subtle body channels, winds, and drops, leading to the realization of the union of bliss and emptiness.

Gaṇacakra (tantric feast): Ritual gatherings with offerings, songs, and symbolic consumption, reinforcing non-dual insight.

Mantras and Mudrās: Used to transform speech and body into awakened expressions.

The root mantra of Hevajra is often given as:
Oṁ Hevajra Hūṁ Phat
Different lineages preserve variations of this mantra.

The Hevajra Tantra is practiced :
To attain Buddhahood in a single lifetime.
To realize Mahāmudrā, the Great Seal of reality.
To transform ignorance into wisdom.
To recognize the illusory nature of self and phenomena (through Nairātmyā's teachings).
To cultivate compassion and liberation for all beings.

The tantra emphasizes that both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are mind's display, and through tantric methods, even passions and ignorance can be transmuted into wisdom.

The tantra remains one of the central practices of Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhism.
Its vision of Hevajra and Nairātmyā symbolizes the inseparability of method and wisdom, compassion and emptiness, bliss and voidness.

According to Hevajra Tantra :
Kaya (Body) Hevajra
Vak (Speech) Hevajra
Citta (Mind) Hevajra
Hrdaya (Heart) Hevajra

Kaya (Body) Hevajra
In the Hevajra Tantra, the two-armed form of Hevajra is shown in an active, advancing pose.
He stands on a multi-colored lotus, a corpse, and a sun disk.
His body is dark blue.
In his right hand he holds a vajra club, and in his left a skull cup marked with a vajra.
He embraces his consort Vajranairatma.
A khatvanga staff rests on his left shoulder, and he is adorned with the six traditional symbolic ornaments.

In the Sādhanamālā, however, this form of Hevajra is described differently: he appears alone, without a consort (ekavīra form).

Vak (Speech) Hevajra
In the Hevajra Tantra, the four-armed form of Speech (Vāk) Hevajra is shown in an advancing pose.
He stands on a multi-colored lotus, a corpse, and a sun disk.
His body is dark blue.
In one right hand he holds a vajra, and in one left hand he holds a skull filled with blood.
With his other pair of arms, he embraces his consort Vajravarahi.

Citta (Mind) Hevajra
In the Hevajra Tantra, the six-armed form of Mind (Citta) Hevajra is shown in an advancing pose, with his right leg extended and left leg bent, standing on a multi-colored lotus, a corpse, and a sun disk.
His body is dark blue, and he has three faces - the central one blue, the right white, and the left red.
Each face has three bloodshot eyes, four sharp fangs, and a fierce expression with frowning, knotted brows.
His tawny hair rises upward, topped with a crossed vajra.

In his hands he holds different implements:

Two right hands hold a vajra and a knife.
Two left hands hold a trident and a bell.
The last pair of arms embraces his consort Vajraśṛṅkhalā.

Hevajra is filled with the nine dramatic sentiments, and his adornments include a crown of five dry skulls, a necklace of fifty freshly severed heads, and the six symbolic ornaments (seals).

Hrdaya (Heart) Hevajra
In the Hevajra Tantra, the Heart (Hṛdaya) Hevajra is described as a sixteen-armed, four-legged, eight-faced deity.
He stands with two legs in the half-crossed posture (ardha-paryaṅka) and the other two in the ālīḍha posture (left bent, right extended).
Beneath him is a multi-colored eight-petaled lotus resting on the bodies of the four Māras - appearing as yellow Brahmā, black Viṣṇu, white Śiva (Maheśvara), and yellow Indra - with a sun disk over their hearts.

Hevajra appears as a youth of sixteen years, black in color, naked, with eight faces, sixteen arms, and four legs. His central face is black, the first right is white, the first left is red, and the upper face is smoky and fierce; the other outer two faces on each side are black.

Each face has three bloodshot eyes, four sharp fangs, a vibrating tongue, and a fierce frown with knotted brows. His tawny hair streams upward, crowned with a crossed vajra.
On his head he wears a diadem of five dry skulls.

In his sixteen hands he holds sixteen skull cups.

The central pair of hands hold a skull cup with a white elephant and the yellow earth-goddess Pṛthivī, while embracing his consort Vajranairatma.

Her right hand holds a curved knife (kartika), and her left hand, wrapped around Hevajra's neck, holds a skull cup (kapāla).

In the other skull cups are placed beings and deities:
Right-hand skull cups: a blue horse, a white-nosed donkey, a red ox, a grey camel, a red human, a blue sarabha deer, and an owl or cat.

Left-hand skull cups: the white water-god Varuṇa, the green wind-god Vāyu, the red fire-god Agni/Tejas, the white moon-god Chandra, the red sun-god Sūrya/Āditya, blue Yama lord of death, and yellow Kubera/Dhanada, lord of wealth.

Hevajra is adorned with the six symbolic ornaments - circlet, earrings, necklace, bracelets, girdle, and anklets.

He is smeared with the ashes of the charnel ground.

He also wears a necklace of fifty freshly severed human heads.

According to Samputa Tantra :
Kaya (Body) Hevajra
Vak (Speech) Hevajra
Citta (Mind) Hevajra
Hrdaya (Heart) Hevajra

The four forms of Hevajra described in the Samputa Tantra all dance on a lotus, corpse, blood-filled skull cup and sun disk throne.

Kaya (Body) Hevajra
The two-armed Kaya-Hevajra, known as the “Shaker of All the Three Worlds”, is shown in a dancing posture.

He stands upon a multi-colored lotus, a corpse, a blood-filled skull cup, and a sun disk.

His body is black, with one face, three round red eyes, and two arms.

In his right hand he holds a five-pronged vajra club, and in his left hand a skull cup brimming with blood.
He embraces his consort Vajranairatma, who is blue in color, with one face and two arms, holding a curved knife in one hand and a skull cup in the other.

Vak (Speech) Hevajra
The four-armed Vak-Hevajra is shown in a dancing posture, standing on a multi-colored lotus, a corpse, a blood-filled skull cup, and a sun disk.

His body is black, with one face, three round red eyes, two legs, and four arms.

In his outer right hand he holds a five-pronged vajra club, and in his outer left hand a skull cup filled with blood.
The inner pair of arms embrace his consort Vajravarahi, who appears in a form similar to his own.

Citta (Mind) Hevajra
The six-armed Citta-Hevajra is shown in a dancing posture (ardha paryaṅka), with his right toenails pressing against his left thigh, standing on an eight-petaled multi-colored lotus, a corpse, a blood-filled skull cup, and a sun disk.

He is black in color, with three faces - black, white, and red - each with three bloodshot eyes.

His light yellow hair streams upward, topped with a crossed vajra, and he wears a crown of five dry skulls.

His body is adorned with a necklace of fifty freshly severed human heads, the six symbolic ornaments, and a tiger-skin skirt.

Of his six arms:
The first pair of hands hold a vajra and a bell, while embracing his consort Vajraśṛṅkhalā, who is similar in form.

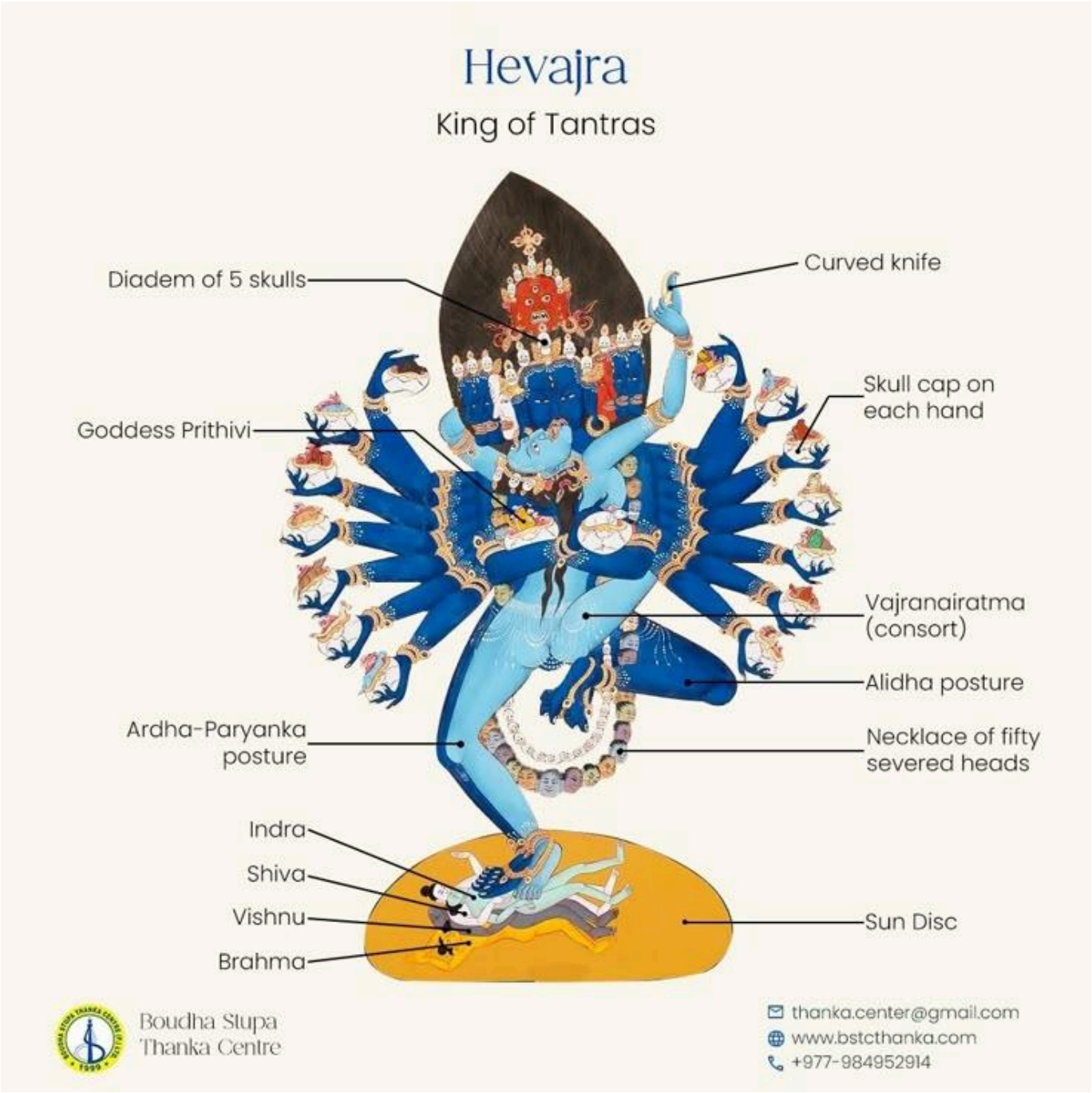
The other right hands hold an arrow and a trident.
The other left hands hold a bow and a skull cup.

Hrdaya (Heart) Hevajra
The sixteen-armed, four-legged Hrdaya-Hevajra stands with two legs in dancing posture (ardha-paryaṅka) and two legs in ālīḍha posture (right leg extended), on an eight-petaled multi-colored lotus, the four Māras (Skanda-Māra as yellow Brahmā, Kleśa-Māra as black Viṣṇu, Mṛtyu-Māra as white Śiva, Devaputra-Māra as pale yellow Śakra), a blood-filled skull cup, and a sun disk.

He is black in color, with eight faces, sixteen arms, and four legs.
His central face is black and laughing, the right face white, the left face red, the upper face black with fangs, and the remaining four faces black.
Each face has three bloodshot eyes.
His tawny hair flows upward, topped with a double vajra, and he wears a crown of five dry skulls.
He is adorned with a necklace of fifty freshly severed human heads, the six symbolic ornaments, and a tiger-skin skirt.

Of his arms:
The first pair of hands hold a vajra and a bell, embracing his consort Nairatma, who is blue, with two hands holding a curved knife (gri-gug) and a skull cup.

The remaining right hands hold a sword, arrow, wheel, skull cup, club, trident, and hook.
The remaining left hands hold a lotus, bow, trident, skull, jewel, threatening forefinger, and noose.



Hevajra Heruka

Yamantaka Tantra

Yamantaka

The Yamāntaka Tantra is one of the most important Anuttarayoga Tantras in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The central deity of this tantra is Yamāntaka, a wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

However, the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa describes Yamāntaka to be an emanation of Vajrapani.

In Chinese Buddhism and Shingon Buddhism, Yamāntaka is the wrathful emanation of Amitabha.

Manjushree adopted this form in order to defeat Yama, the lord of death who was arrogantly interfering with karma by claiming victims before their time was up.

Yamāntaka submitted Yama by terrorizing him with his form, one even more frightening than that of Yama himself, which at the same time also acted as a mirror of Yama's horrible appearance.

Yama then repented his actions and became a guardian of dharma. Through this way, Mañjuśrī also exposed the illusory nature of the fear of death, as well as the unreality of death itself.

Yamantaka embodies the supreme wisdom that conquers death (Yama), ignorance, and all obstacles on the path to enlightenment.

Yamāntaka is a Sanskrit name which literally means “Destroyer of Death” (Yama यम = Lord of Death, Antaka अन्तक = Terminator), symbolizing the transformation of fear and mortality into the wisdom of immortality (enlightenment) and fearlessness.

In Tibetan, he is known as gShin-rje gshed (གཤིན་རྗེ་རྒྱུ་ གཤེད་), meaning “Slayer of the Lord of Death.”
He is also called Vajrabhairava, the “Adamantine Terrifier,” highlighting his fierce role as a wrathful protector.

The tantra is considered a revelation of the Ādibuddha Vajradhara, transmitted to the great Indian Mahāsiddhas.

It is closely associated with the Manjuśrī cycle, as Yamāntaka is none other than Mañjuśrī appearing in wrathful form to overcome death and delusion.

The Yamāntaka Tantra (Vajrabhairava Tantra) emerged in India around the 8th–9th century CE, a time when tantric Buddhism was flourishing in centers like Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, Oḍḍiyāna, and eastern India.

It is considered one of the Five Great Tantric Systems of Tibetan Buddhism, along with Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja, and Kālacakra.

Prominent commentaries were written by Indian masters like Virūpa, Lalitavajra and Anangavajra, and Tibetan masters like Ra Lotsawa and Tsongkhapa, who gave definitive philosophical and practical guidance.

The tantra was transmitted by important Indian Mahāsiddhas such as: Virūpa, Lalitavajra, Anangavajra.

In Tibet, it was brought especially by Ra Lotsawa Dorje Drak (1016–1128), who became famous as the principal transmitter of the Yamāntaka cycle.
Later, it was systematized by great masters including Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), who gave detailed expositions of Vajrabhairava practice.

The practice spread widely in Sakya and Gelug traditions, and remains central to the Gelug school to this day. where Vajrabhairava is regarded as the principal wrathful yidam. Tsongkhapa himself emphasized its practice, and it remains a cornerstone of Gelug tantric curriculum.

It is also practiced in the Sakya tradition and integrated into certain Kagyu lineages.

In Nepal, Newar Vajrācārya Buddhists continue Vajrabhairava practices as part of their tantric ritual cycle.

It spread to Mongolia and Bhutan, where it remains highly revered.

The tantra is still practiced in Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, and Bhutan, and continues to be an essential part of Vajrayāna retreats and monastic curricula.

The Yamāntaka Tantra belongs to the Father class of Anuttarayoga Tantra, emphasizing method (upāya), skillful means, and wrathful energy in union with wisdom (prajñā).

It is primarily a wrathful tantra, It focuses on the destruction of death, fear, and ignorance through wrathful deity yoga and advanced yogic practices.

Unlike some other tantras, Yamāntaka is especially focused on conquering mortality and delusion, providing a symbolic and practical framework for fearlessness and liberation.

The main scripture is known as the Vajrabhairava Tantra, preserved in both Sanskrit fragments and Tibetan translations (Tengyur/Kangyur collections).

It is part of the broader Yoginītantra corpus.

The root text and its explanatory tantras cover :
Mandala construction and visualization
Ritual empowerments (abhiṣeka)
Yogic generation and completion stages
Wrathful subjugation rites
Subtle body practices of winds (prāṇa), channels (nāḍī), and drops (bindu)
Mantra and mudrā
Ethical and ritual frameworks for practitioners

Yamāntaka appears as an awe-inspiring wrathful heruka, symbolizing the ferocious wisdom that destroys death and ignorance.

His form varies in different cycles (single-headed, six-headed, or the most famous “thirteen-deity” Vajrabhairava form).

Yamāntaka manifests in several different forms, one of which has six legs, six faces and six arms holding various weapons while sitting or standing on a water buffalo.
The topmost face is the wrathful aspect of Mañjuśrī, with a red face below it.
The other faces are yellow, dark blue, red, black, white, grey, and brown.

Each face has three eyes.

The most common representation, Vajramahabhairava, depicts 9 heads, thirty-two hands and sixteen legs standing on Yama and all the Deva's, and Asuras.
Also, like Yama, he is represented with an erect penis, symbolizing the alchemy of bodily fluids.

Yamāntaka is often depicted as:
Dark blue or black in colour, symbolizing the vastness of space and indestructible wisdom.

He often has nine faces, with the central one being a buffalo head, surrounded by other fierce faces (including a peaceful Mañjuśrī face above). Fierce faces displaying fierce fangs and three eyes.

He has thirty-four arms, holding vajras, swords, flaying knives, skull cups, and other tantric implements.

He has sixteen legs, trampling Yama (the Lord of Death) and other obstructing deities, showing conquest over death and delusion.

Embracing Vajraprāpti (or Kālarātri) in yab-yum union, symbolizing inseparable method and wisdom.

He is adorned with a crown of skulls, garland of fifty severed heads, bone ornaments, tiger skin, and flames of wisdom.

This terrifying form embodies the compassionate wrath that destroys ego, fear, and all hindrances to liberation.

In Chinese Buddhism and Shingon Buddhism, Yamāntaka is pictured with six faces, legs and arms holding various weapons while sitting on a white ox.

The Yamāntaka Mandala is a complex sacred diagram representing :
Center: Yamāntaka with consort Vajravetali (also known as Vetali)
Inner circle: Surrounding wrathful herukas and bodhisattvas.
Outer circle: Protective deities, dharmapālas, and yoginīs.

The mandala serves as both a meditative visualization and a ritual tool, helping practitioners to transform ordinary perceptions into divine awareness and fearlessness.

The Yamāntaka Tantra emphasizes:
Empowerment (Abhiṣeka): Initiation into the deity's mandala is required.

Generation Stage: Visualization of Vajrabhairava in union with Vajraprāpti, recitation of mantra, mandala offering, and deity yoga.

Completion Stage (niṣpannakrama): subtle body yogas, channel and wind practices, inner heat (tummo), realization of the inseparability of bliss and emptiness, and union with wisdom consort for realization of Mahāmudrā.

Mantra: The root mantra is often given as:
Oṁ Yamāntaka Hūṁ Phaṭ
with variations in different lineages.
Using Oṁ Yamāntaka Hūṁ Phat and associated consort mantras for purification and transformation.

Ethics and View: Practitioners uphold tantric vows and meditate on emptiness, compassion, and the union of bliss and wisdom.

Practitioners use these methods to overcome fear, attachment, and ignorance, turning even wrathful emotions into wisdom energy.

The Yamāntaka Tantra is practiced to:
Conquer death, fear, and ignorance.
Transform wrathful emotions into enlightened wisdom.

Attain fearlessness and freedom from samsaric suffering. Realize Mahāmudrā, the union of bliss and emptiness. Achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime for the benefit of all beings.

It is considered especially powerful for overcoming life obstacles, karmic hindrances, and untimely death.

Within Buddhism, "terminating death" is a quality of all buddhas as they have stopped the cycle of rebirth, samsara.
So Yamāntaka represents the goal of the Mahayana practitioner's journey to enlightenment, or the journey itself: On final awakening, one manifests Yamāntaka – the ending of death.

Through its profound symbolism and fierce compassion, Yamāntaka represents the ultimate victory over death, ego, and delusion, guiding practitioners to the fearless wisdom of enlightenment for themselves and all beings.

Yamāntaka

Yamāntaka

Kalachakra Tantra

Kalachakra in yab-yum with Vishvamata

The Kālacakra Tantra is one of the most advanced and profound tantras in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The central deity of this tantra is Shree Kālacakra, a wrathful yet enlightened form of the Buddha who embodies the ultimate understanding of time, cycles, and the union of wisdom and method.

Kālacakra literally means “Wheel of Time” or “Time Cycles", reflecting its teachings on cosmic, social, and individual cycles.

The Sanskrit title is Śrī-Kālacakra-nāma-mahāyoginī-tantra-rāja, meaning “The Great King of Yoginī Tantras called the Glorious Kālacakra.”

In Tibetan it is called Dus-kyi ‘khor-lo (དུས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་), which means “Wheel of Time.” The name symbolizes the intricate link between cosmic order, planetary cycles, karma, and meditation.

The tantra is said to have been revealed by the Ādi-Buddha Vajradhara, transmitted through a lineage of enlightened masters.

Kalachakra and Shakyamuni Buddha are said to be the nirmankaya of the Adi Buddha Vajradhara. While the Vajrasattva is the sambhogkaya of Adi Buddha.

It was first taught to King Suchandra of Shambhala by Kālacakra deities themselves.

The term “Kālacakra” is used in two ways: sometimes it refers to the Ādibuddha (which is uncreated, beyond time, eternal, the origin of the world, omniscient, non-dual and beyond causality), and sometimes it refers specifically to the male deity in union with his consort Viśvamata.

Some passages of the tantra also mention Sakyamuni Buddha. They note how he transformed himself into Kālacakra when he taught the tantra to Sucandra, the king of Shambala.

According to the Kālacakra tradition, Sakyamuni Buddha manifested as the Kālachakra deities and taught the Kālachakra root tantra at a stupa in Dharanikota (near modern Amaravathi, Andhra Pradesh).
He did this while supposedly bilocating (appearing in two places at once) at the same time as he was also delivering the Prajñāpāramitā sutras at Griddhraj Parvat in Bihar.

Along with King Suchandra, ninety-six minor kings and emissaries from Shambhala were also said to have received the teachings.
The Kālacakra thus passed directly to the kingdom of Shambhala, where it was held exclusively for hundreds of years.
Later Kings of Shambhala, Mañjushrīkīrti and Pundarika, are said to have condensed and simplified the teachings into the Śri Kālacakra or Laghutantra and its main commentary, the Vimalaprabha, which remain extant today as the heart of the Kālacakra literature.
Fragments of the original tantra have survived; the most significant fragment, the Sekkodesha, was commented upon by Naropa.

The philosophical view of the Kālacakratantra is that of the Mahayana Buddhist Madhyamaka school, and the text attempts to refute all other Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems.

The text is considered a mahayogic revelation, combining outer, inner, and secret dimensions of practice.

The Kālacakra tradition holds that Kālacakra teachings were taught in India by Gautama Buddha himself.

The Kālacakra Tantra was composed in Northern India around the late 10th to 11th century CE.

Its teachings flourished in Nālandā and other major tantric centers, and it became especially significant in Tibetan Buddhism.

The Kalachakra tradition's origins are in India and its most active later history and presence has been in Tibet.

The Kalachakra tradition contains teachings on cosmology, theology, philosophy, sociology, soteriology, myth, prophecy, medicine and yoga.

Unlike the other major Yoginītantras (Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja, Yamāntaka), Kālacakra has a strong Shambhala and esoteric cosmological connection.

The tantra was transmitted by great Indian Mahāsiddhas and pandits such as:
Śrīmati
Lakṣmīdhara
Somanātha
Tilopa (indirectly influencing later lineages)
Tilopa and Nāropa influenced broader tantric traditions but are not direct Kālacakra commentators.

In Tibet, the Kālacakra teachings were brought primarily by Śākyasribhadra and Samantashrī.

The Jonang school became the most specialized in Kālacakra, with Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen, Rangjung Dorje (the 3rd Karmapa) and later Taranatha.

Tibetan commentators include:
Tsongkhapa, who emphasized Kālacakra as the highest science of body, speech, and mind.
Rangjung Dorje, the 3rd Karmapa
Buton Rinchen Drub
Panchen Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen

These commentaries elaborate on cosmology, social ethics, subtle body practices, mandalas, and the path of Mahāmudrā.

The tantra is now widely practiced in the Gelug and Jonang schools, with major monasteries like Tashilhunpo, Drepung, and Ganden preserving its rituals.

It also influenced the Newar Buddhist tradition in Nepal and the Tibetan diaspora worldwide.

The Kālacakra Tantra belongs to the Anuttarayoga Tantra (Highest Yoga Tantra), but it has unique features that distinguish it from other “mother” or “father” class tantras.

It combines:
Outer Kālacakra (cosmic level): describing planetary cycles, astronomy, and society.

Inner Kālacakra (individual level): describing the human body, subtle winds, channels (nāḍīs), and drops (bindus).

Alternative or Secret Kālacakra (yogic practice): methods of meditation and union with consort to achieve awakening.

It is both a yogic and cosmological tantra, bridging meditation, ritual, astrology, and philosophy.

The Kālacakra Tantra exists in Sanskrit and Tibetan translations.
Its root text has 5 chapters (paṭalas) in some versions, with several commentaries and sub-texts:

Vimalaprabha is a detailed key commentary explaining the tantra’s philosophical, ritual, and yogic aspects.

The Kālacakra Tantra, properly called the Laghu-kālacakratantra-rāja (Sovereign Abridged Kālacakra), is an abridged version of the original Paramādibuddhatantra by the Shambala king Sucandra, which no longer exists.

The abridged version was authored by the Shambala king Manjushriyasas.

The Vimalaprabhā (Stainless Light) commentary by Pundarika is considered the most authoritative on the Kālacakra Tantra and became the basis for all later commentaries.

The tantra integrates cosmology, ethics, initiation rites, mandala construction, generation and completion stage yogas, and the philosophy of śūnyatā.

Shree Kālacakra is a wrathful heruka deity representing the union of wisdom and method.

Common iconography includes:
He is Blue or dark blue in colour, representing space and the vastness of consciousness.

He has four faces (blue, white, red, yellow), each with three eyes.

He has sixteen arms, holding symbolic implements such as vajras, skull cups, tridents, and symbolic weapons of wisdom.

He is usually depicted in yab-yum with Viśvamata (Mother of the Universe), the female consort representing wisdom.

He is standing in alidha (archer) posture, trampling on hindering deities.

He wears garlands of skulls, bone ornaments, tiger skins, and crescent moon and sun, representing impermanence and enlightened mind.

The Kālacakra maṇḍala represents:
Outer maṇḍala: The universe and Shambhala's kingdoms, planets, and social orders.

Inner maṇḍala: The subtle body with channels, winds, and drops.

Secret maṇḍala: The union of Kālacakra and Viśvamata for tantric realization.

Visualization in the maṇḍala integrates cosmic, societal, and individual levels, teaching the practitioner the interdependence of all phenomena.

The Kālacakra Tantra emphasizes on :
Empowerments (abhiṣeka), often requiring full lineage transmission.

Generation stage practices: visualization of deities and mandala offerings.

Completion stage practices: subtle body yogas, working with channels (nāḍīs), winds (prāṇas), and drops (bindus).

Mantra and mudrā: Used for purification and transformation of body, speech, and mind.

Ethical and societal teachings: The tantra contains advice on social harmony, moral behavior, and governance, particularly in Shambhala traditions.

The root mantra is:
ॐ हं क्षं मं लं वं यं रं ओं हूं फट्
Oṁ haṁ kṣaḥ ma la va ra yaṁ om hūṁ phat

Mantras of the consort and associated yidams are also central to practice.

The Kālacakra Tantra is practiced :
To achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime.
To realize Mahāmudrā, the ultimate union of bliss and emptiness.
To transform ignorance and desire into enlightened wisdom.
To understand the cyclical nature of time, karma, and societal harmony.
To harmonize inner and outer worlds through ethical conduct and tantric meditation.

These teachings are meant to lead to a transformation of one's body and mind into perfect Buddhahood through various yogic methods

It is believed that this tantra is particularly effective in the degenerate age (kali yuga), as it combines practical meditation, cosmology, and societal teachings.

The Kālacakra Tantra has a unique place in Vajrayāna Buddhism:
It is central to the Gelug school, especially through the Dalai Lamas.

The Shambhala prophecy and teachings of Kālacakra influenced both monastic and lay practice.

Its cosmological and subtle body teachings influenced tantric physiology, astrology, and ritual in Tibet and Mongolia.

The tantra is still widely taught today in empowerment ceremonies, large-scale initiations, and advanced yogic retreats around the world.

Kālacakra exemplifies the integration of cosmic, social, and personal enlightenment, teaching practitioners that understanding time, ethics, and subtle body practice leads to the ultimate liberation for oneself and all beings.

The Kālacakratantra is divided into five chapters.
The content of the five chapters is as follows:

The first chapter deals with what is called the "outer Kālacakra" (the world system, loka-dhatu), which provides a cosmology based on Vaibhasika Abhidharma, Samkhya, the Puranas and Jain cosmology.
The Kālacakra calendar, the birth and death of universes, the Solar System and the workings of the elements are expounded.
The myth and prophecy of the kingdom of Shambhala is also discussed.

The second chapter deals with "inner Kālacakra," which concerns human gestation and birth, the functions within the human body, and the subtle body aspects, mainly the channels, winds, drops and so forth.
Human experience is described by four mind states: waking, dream, deep sleep, and a fourth state which is available through the energies of sexual orgasm.
The potentials (drops, bindus) which give rise to these states are described, together with the processes that flow from them.

The third chapter deals with the requirements and preparation for meditation, mainly, the initiations (abhiseka) of Kālacakra.

The fourth chapter explains the sadhana and yoga (spiritual practices), both the meditation on the mandala and its deities in the generation stage, and the perfection stage practices of the "six yogas".

The fifth chapter describes the state of gnosis (jñāna), which is the result or fruit of the practice.

In the Kālacakratantra's cosmology, samsara (cyclic existence) is made up of innumerable Buddha fields and

of the five elements or properties (characterized by origination, duration and destruction).
The whole cosmos arises due to the collective karma of sentient beings, which produces vital winds (vayu) that mold and dissolve the atomic particles that make up the various inanimate things of the world and the bodies of sentient beings.

The Kālacakratantra contains various ideas about society, the individual's place in society and how they are interrelated.
These provide a sociological theory which forms the framework for the Kālacakratantra's ideas on history, prophecy and soteriology.
The Kālacakra system is unique in that it is the only Buddhist tantra that explores these social and caste issues at length.

Like earlier Buddhist texts and traditions, the Kālacakra literature is sharply critical of traditional Indian caste divisions and Brahmanical views of the hierarchy and status of the castes as being divinely ordained and as having inherent moral qualities.
Indian Buddhists replaced this model with the idea that all humans are roughly equal and that caste divisions are mere conventional designations.

The Kālacakratantra adopts these views and also interprets them through a tantric lens.
In the Kālacakra system, all people are equal since they are all empty of inherent existence, are all part of the same non-dual reality, i.e. Kālacakra and thus all have the potential for Buddhahood

The Kālacakra tradition saw attachment to caste and family as spiritual blocks and Kālacakra texts warn against social discrimination, which is based on this attachment and has negative effects on one's practice of the path. Indeed, Kālacakra texts often see the absence of attachment to social status as a prerequisite for receiving tantric teachings.
Because of this, Kālacakra texts attempt to show the insubstantiality of social class and caste and thus to refute the basis for attachment to caste.

The Kālacakra system also links the soteriological implications of social relationships to socio-political events. Negative events, such as the Muslim conquests of India and the decline of Buddhism in India, are linked to social segregation and divisions (based on corrupt Puranic teaching).
Meanwhile, positive events such as the defeat of "the barbarian Dharma" (i.e. Islam) are linked with social and

spiritual unification of all castes, outcastes and barbarians into one single vajra-family.
Because the Vaisnava and Saiva Dharmas promote class prejudice (jati-vada), create a false sense of identity based on caste, and thus create social divisions, the Kālacakra tradition admonishes Buddhist practitioners not to admire or follow these Dharmas.
The tradition also sees caste theory as being related to false theories of a self (atman), to linguistic prejudice (based around the belief in the superiority of Sanskrit) and to theories of a creator god.

The Kālacakratantra contains passages that refer to a Buddhist kingdom called "Shambhala", which is ruled by a line of thirty-two Buddhist kings that preserve the Kālacakra teachings.
This kingdom is said to be located near Mount Kailasa and its capital is Kalāpa.
It also mentions how this kingdom comes into conflict with invaders called mleccha ("barbarians"), which most scholars agree refers to Muslims and the Muslim invasions of India.

The text prophesies a war fought by a massive army of Buddhists and Hindus, led by King Raudra Kalkin, against the Muslim persecutors.

Then after the victory of good over evil and attainment of religious freedom, Kalki ushers in a new era of peace and Sambhala will become a place of perfection.
Further battles with the barbarians are described as well in later eras

A passage from the tantra mentions a series of figures who are said to be in the service of demonic snakes. These figures are "Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, "The white-clad one", Muhammed, and Mathani." Muhammed and his teaching of Islam is presented as a barbaric teaching and consequently the main enemy of Buddhism.

While the Kālacakratantra adopts non-buddhist content, it criticizes the Brahmanical Puranic religion.
The text frequently refers to the Brahmanic teachings, especially those of the Puranas, as false teachings, devoid of reasoning, creating confusion among foolish people, and composed by corrupt Brahmanic sages for the sake of promoting their own social class.

A key element of the Kālacakra teachings is an understanding of certain subtle energetic aspects of the human body.
In Kālacakra (as in other tantric traditions), the human body is believed to contain certain subtle elements, mainly

the three channels (nadis, left, right and central), the vital winds (lung, prana), the four drops (bindus) and six chakras.
These elements function in a cyclical fashion, similar to how cosmological elements also have their cyclical movements.
The Kālacakratantra contains detailed descriptions of these subtle body elements.
In the Kālacakra system, the six chakras that lie along the central channel are as follows: The Crown Chakra, Forehead Chakra, Throat Chakra, Heart Chakra, Navel Chakra, and Secret Place Chakra (pubic region).

These subtle elements are used during tantric meditation practice to attain immutable bliss and primordial wisdom

The Kālacakra deity and his consort reside in the center of the Kālacakra mandala in a palace consisting of four mandalas, one within the other: the mandalas of body, speech, and mind, and in the very center, wisdom and great bliss.

The deities of the mandala are classified into various sets of families or clans (kula) as follows:

Three families representing body, speech, and mind; the left, right, and central channels; to the realms of desire,

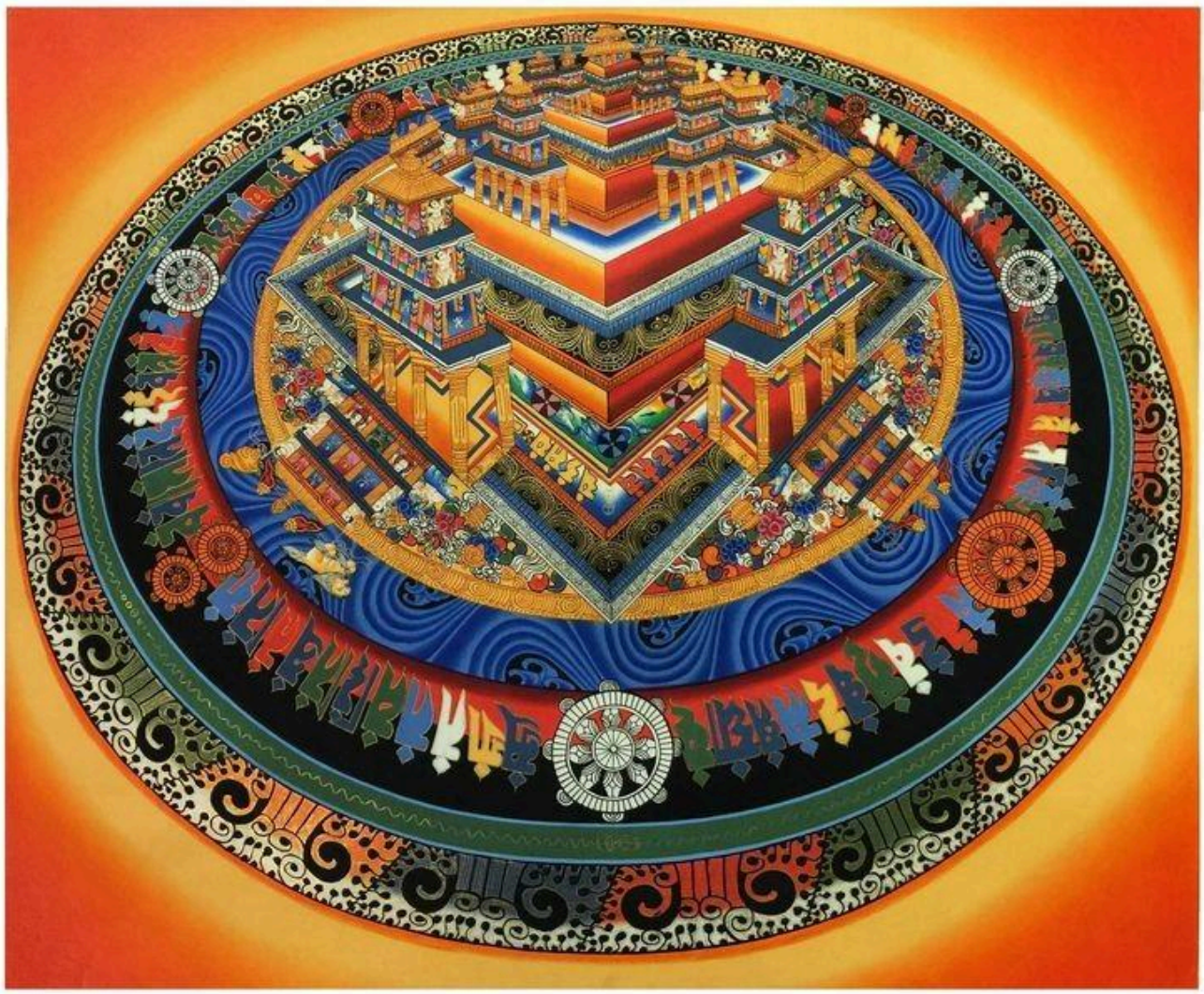
form, and formlessness and to the three bodies of the Buddha.

The four families corresponds to uterine blood, semen, mind, and gnosis; to body, speech, mind, and gnosis; to the four drops (bindu); to the four states of the mind—namely, waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state; to the sun, moon, Rahu, and Agni (Ketu), and in terms of society, they are the four castes.

The five families are the five psycho-physical aggregates (skandha), and in terms of society, they are the four castes and the outcastes.
With regard to ultimate reality, they are the five types of the Buddha's gnosis manifesting as the five Buddhas—Aksobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi.

The six families are the five psycho-physical aggregates and their emptiness; and in terms of society, they are the four castes and the classes of Dombas and Candalas.
With regard to ultimate reality, the six families are the five aforementioned Buddhas and the Svabhavikakaya.

Kalchakra Mandala



3D Kalchakra Mandala

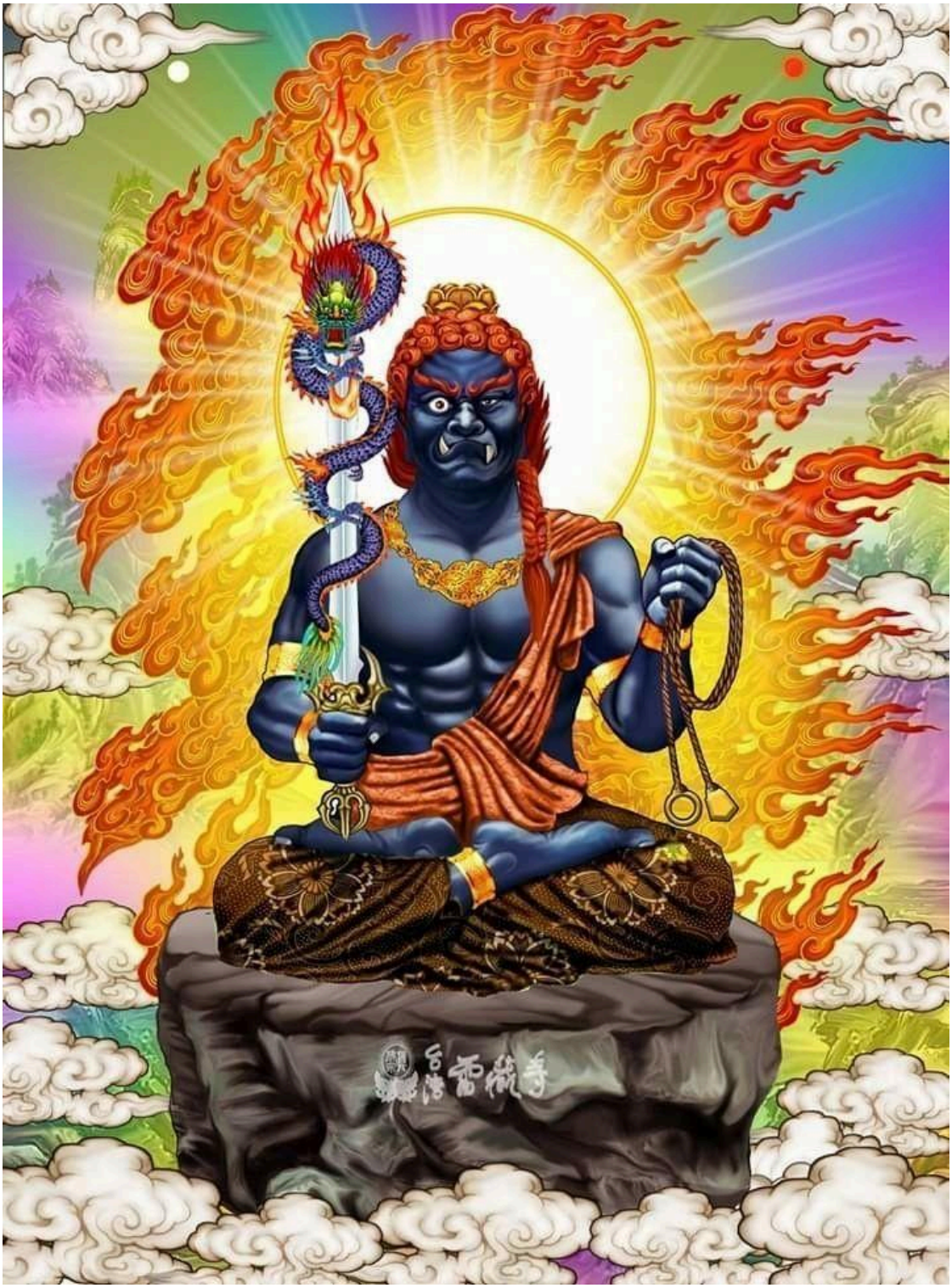
Symbol of Kalachakra

Jambhala of Five Buddha Families

Jambhala of Five Buddha Families

Vajrasattva Boddhisatva

Avalokiteswara Boddhisatva



Chandamaharoshana - Acala nath

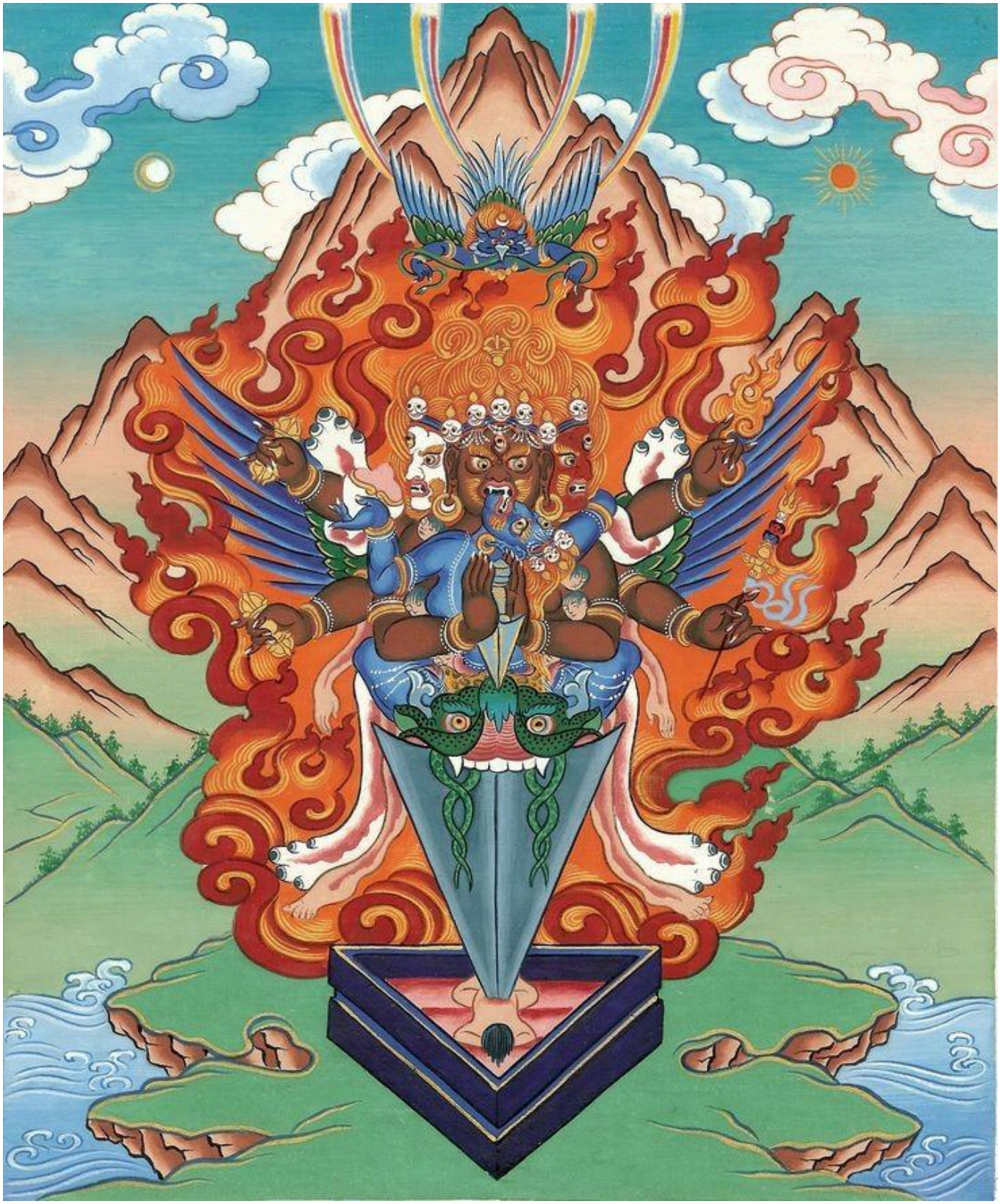
Vajrapani Boddhisatva

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva

Trailokyavijaya

Manjushree Boddhisatva

Maitreya Boddhisatva



Vajrakilaya Heruka

Garuda of Five Buddha Families